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CHINESE-ENGLISH BILINGUAL EDUCATION:
PARENTAL ATTITUDES AND BILINGUAL SCHOOLING

by

(C) JENA, CHI-YUNG LEE

A THESIS

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IN

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ABSTRACT

This study is designed to explore the relationship between cultural attitudes and bilingual education. It focuses specifically on Chinese Canadian families' attitudes towards the retention of Chinese language and culture, the development of a Chinese-English bilingual school, and parental expectations of and rationale for supporting such a school. The study then looks briefly at the recent formation of the Edmonton Chinese-English Bilingual Program in order to determine if it is programatically congruent with the stated parental attitudes.

The respondents for the study are forty Chinese Canadian families in Edmonton. Included in this non-random sample are thirty-six first-generation immigrants, three second-generation Canadian born Chinese and one family of third-generation immigrants. The survey was done through personal open-ended interviews which were conducted in Cantonese, a dialect of the Chinese language spoken in the Southern part of China. Information regarding the respondents and their attitudes towards culture and language preservation and Chinese-English bilingual education were obtained during the interviews.

The interviews show that the Chinese parents do support the establishment of a Chinese-English bilingual school in Edmonton. Their reasons for supporting such a program are

to preserve their ethnic culture and language, to prevent intergenerational language and culture loss, to develop positive ethnic identification in the younger generation, to widen their children's scope of experience for cognitive development and to promote communication between the younger generation and the older generation of their own ethnic community. The results also indicate there is not much difference in attitude towards the establishment of a Chinese-English bilingual school between different religious groups and different socio-economic classes. However, different generations do express some different opinions with regard to such a program.

One unanticipated result of this study was that it revealed a number of dilemmas and problems that have been encountered by the Edmonton Chinese-English Bilingual School Program. It was found that this program is not quite programatically congruent with the Chinese parental attitudes in the sense that the elite language of Mandarin rather than the "mother tongue" of the students (Cantonese) is taught. This implies that the program is more "elitist bilingualism" than "vernacular bilingualism". It was also found that many of controversial problems have arisen because of the issue of "dialects" of instruction. These problems relate to both the practicality of the program and the students' academic progress.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Bilingual education, in a broad sense, implies the use of two languages as media of instruction in connection with teaching the curriculum (Fishman, 1976). In the American context, it has been defined by the United States Office of Education as the use of two languages, one of which is English, as medium of instruction for the same pupil population in a well-organized program which encompasses part or all of the curriculum and includes the study of the history and culture associated with the ethnic language of a certain minority group. A complete bilingual program develops and maintains the children's self esteem and a legitimate pride in both cultures (Fishman, 1976). Such a definition suggests that in North America, bilingual education refers to the teaching of an official language (English, French, Spanish) and a certain minority ethnic language together with its history and culture. With bilingual education, hopefully, the minority children will gain pride in their own ethnic identity and culture.

Within such a broad definition, there are few countries where one cannot find some instances of bilingual education. In some countries, especially the developed ones such as

Canada in which the official languages of English and French have already achieved international status, a changing climate of tolerance towards minorities has induced them to organize schools in the minority ethnic languages with (Mackey, 1970). On the other hand, this same climate is associated with reduced discrimination and increased minority opportunities in the general society, leading to a decline in loyalties to minority languages and a breakdown in ethnic communities.

Because of this shift in loyalties, it is generally believed that unless the minority languages are maintained and cultures are strenuously reinforced in the wider community and pressure is exerted for their extensive use, cultural boundaries cannot be maintained (Epstein, 1976). Barth, (1969) like Epstein, emphasizes mother tongue maintenance as an efficient way to secure ethnic boundaries. That is, ethnic language instruction can contribute to boundary maintenance, as well as to an appreciation of cultural heritage. Stern (1979) in a similar vein, points out that in recent years there has been an eagerness to make education in two languages much more widely available and to regard bilingual schooling as educationally desirable for "boundary maintenance" or continuation of an ethnic group, in which tradition and ancestral languages of the minorities are preserved. These arguments imply that culture and

language maintenance are two of the cultural factors which lead to the establishment of bilingual education.

Enthusiasm for the establishment of bilingual education can be widely seen in Canada. In Ontario, under the Heritage Language Program, there were almost 85,000 students receiving mother tongue instruction for up to thirty minutes per day in an extended school day in early 1978. To date, more than 70,000 students in Ontario attend similar programs offering Portuguese, Cantonese, Italian, Spanish, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Greek, Korean, Croatian, Russian, Japanese, Polish and Ukrainian (Dawson, 1982).

Until recently, the teaching of minority language in Canada was offered primarily as "Saturday part-time bilingual schooling" by private ethnic schools or individual ethnic communities. However, this is now changing. More than 75,000 students were enrolled in secondary level minority language classes across the country (excluding Quebec) in 1977 (Statistics Canada, 1978:40) and most of these students were enrolled in a variety of bilingual and bicultural programs offered by the local Public School Boards. In Toronto, a Chinese-Canadian Bicultural Program at Orde and Ogden Public Schools was raised in 1971 when some of the Chinese parents in the area expressed concerns over the growing lack of communication between their children and themselves. Between then and 1973, the Chinese

parents and the two schools made representations in several ways to the Public School Board of Toronto until the program was finally officially approved in August, 1973 (The Chinese-Canadian Bicultural Program of Toronto, 1975).

Nine years later, in the city of Edmonton, the Public School Board also gave official approval to the establishment of Chinese-English bilingual programs in two elementary schools starting with the kindergarten level only. In addition to the Chinese-English bilingual schooling, in 1980, more than 750 students were enrolled in Ukrainian-English bilingual classes from kindergarten to grade six level in eight schools of Edmonton. This number has recently doubled (Dawson, 1982). The Ukrainian-English bilingual school nowadays offer programs from kindergarten to grade ten in the city of Edmonton.

Several schools also offer German instruction from kindergarten to elementary grades. "Cultural Enrichment" programs are also held in the Cree language in a few Edmonton schools. It is apparent that bilingual-bicultural schooling has become a widespread phenomenon in North America. It is partly for this reason that bilingual education has become a popular issue of investigation. However, Paulston (1976) points out that most research on bilingual education treats bilingual programs as the independent or causal variable. Many studies have been

attempted to assess students' language achievement by standardized test scores where the independent variable is the language (mother tongue or the second language) used as the medium of instruction.

However, the orientation of this thesis is to treat bilingual education as a "dependent variable," or more accurately, a phenomenon dependent on other factors. In other words, the success of any bilingual program may be determined more by the cultural motives, parental attitudes, attitudes of its supporters and participants, ethnic community influence and other objective determinants rather than by the intellectual capabilities or performance of the children, as Paulston (1976) claims. Thus, in this work, I propose to explore various cultural factors which contribute to the establishment of bilingual programs.

To achieve a better understanding of these cultural influences, this thesis will examine three areas:

i) recent literature on bilingual education in order to identify the different cultural motives of ethnic parents who want bilingual education, including their beliefs about the relationship between culture preservation and "mother tongue" bilingual education;

ii) the attitudes and expectations of Chinese parents

in Edmonton towards a Chinese-English Bilingual School Program;

iii) the Chinese-English Bilingual School of Edmonton, including its history, program, "dialects" of instruction and difficulties that have been encountered.

The thesis will bring together the examination of these areas by two comparisons. Firstly, it will ask whether or not the pattern of reasons and opinions about bilingual education held by Edmonton Chinese parents is congruent with the descriptive literature on parental beliefs. Secondly, it will compare the existing bilingual program in Edmonton to parental reasons for wanting or not wanting bilingual schooling. In particular, this second comparison will make it possible to address the issue of "dialects" of instruction in the Chinese-English Bilingual School of Edmonton (Mandarin versus Cantonese).

Before we proceed to study these two areas of comparisons, in order to obtain a better understanding in the Chinese community and the parents' attitudes toward the Chinese-English bilingual schooling, it is important to look at the statistics about the Chinese population in the country and in the city of Edmonton itself. It is necessary to do so because the constantly increasing Chinese population has exerted great influence on the development of

the Chinese-English Bilingual Program in both the whole country and in the city of Edmonton.

Furthermore, to have a clearer picture about the second comparison which relates to the issue of "dialects" of instruction in this Chinese-English Bilingual School of Edmonton (Mandarin versus Cantonese), it is necessary to describe the general aspects of the "Chinese language." Otherwise, we will find it difficult to understand the language problem of the Chinese-English Bilingual Program of Edmonton.

The Chinese in Canada: History and Statistics

Chinese have generally been regarded as a race with a very strong ethnic boundary and attachment. They are found in almost every corner of the world. No matter where they are, they like to stay together and form their own communities. But in North America they usually have not had a choice. It is mainly because of the century-long racism they have been forced to stay together and fight against the prejudices of the society as a whole (Low, 1982).

Chinese were among the earliest non-white immigrants to enter Canada. The first influx who came to British Columbia between 1858 and 1866 were attracted to Canada with the opening of the Cariboo gold fields. Most of these Chinese were farm laborers in Guangdong before they migrated to

North America. They were mainly Cantonese and Toashanese speaking. Many of these earliest arrivals left Canada after the late 1860's, while those remaining typically moved into restaurants, laundries, shoemaking, tailoring, domestic services and gardening.

The small Chinese population began to grow between 1881 and 1885 with the importation of thousands of coolies to work for the Canadian Pacific Railway as railway laborers in interior British Columbia. During this period, even though there was serious restriction on the immigration of Chinese (the tenfold increase of a head tax from $50 in 1885 to $500 in 1903), many Chinese came into Canada.

The Chinese minority continued to grow steadily from 17,312 in 1901 to 27,831 in 1911 and 39,587 in 1921. Within twenty years, the number of Chinese had doubled. The Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 finally barred the entrance of Chinese to Canada and denied resident Chinese workers the right to bring their wives and children to Canada from China. Owing to this discrimination or racism, the Chinese population declined from 46,519 in 1931 to 34,627 in 1941, and remained fairly static during the 1940's (Anderson & Frideres).

The Immigration Act was not repealed until 1947. In spite of the Act being repealed, Chinese immigrants were not welcomed to the country. Only the immediate family of

Chinese residents were eligible to apply for immigration to Canada. However, with this slight liberation of immigration policies after 1947, the Chinese population grew rapidly from 35,528 in 1951 to 58,197 in 1961.

During the last twenty years, a great influx of refugees from China, Vietnam and immigrants from Hong Kong have brought a vast number of Chinese to North America. In the ten years from 1961 to 1971, the number of Chinese in Canada more than doubled from 58,197 to 118,815. Most of these newcomers tend to settle in cities for employment opportunities and to form strong ethnic communities with which they can communicate and identify. Of the 118,815 counted in the 1971 census, 36,405 (30.6%) were in metro Vancouver; 26,285 (22.1%) were in metro Toronto and 10,655 (9%) were in metro Montreal.

A study was done in the mid-1970's by O'Bryan, Reitz and Kuplowska (1976:35) which showed that 88.7% of the Chinese population were first-generation immigrants, while over half or 53% of these immigrants came to this country during the period of 1960-1975. Particularly during the early 1970's, with the federal relaxation in immigration policy, the number of immigrants increased tremendously. According to Statistics Canada (1971), the total number of Chinese in Canada is 118,815. O'Bryan, Reitz and Kuplowska (1976:35) point out that there was a great increase in the

Chinese population within the period of 1971 to 1974. Their studies indicate that in 1973, the Chinese population increased 8.6% from that of 1971 in the country.

Anderson and Frideres (1981) state that the Chinese immigrants who came during the period 1972 to 1975 came mainly from Hong Kong. They indicate that Hong Kong was ranked as the third major source of Canadian immigrants for the past several years with 45,377 Chinese from this city along arriving between 1968 and 1973.

The Chinese proportion of the total Canadian immigration fluctuated between about 1% and 3% between 1950 and 1967, then increased steadily to about 8% in 1973. By 1968-69 more than 8,000 Chinese a year were entering Canada as landed immigrants. This number declined slightly to 5,000 to 6,000 during the early 1970's, then increased markedly to 13,000 to 15,000 in 1973 to 1975 and probably over 18,000 in 1976 to 1977. Just during the first half of 1976, there were altogether 8,821 Chinese newcomers arriving from Hong Kong alone. As so many of these immigrants are from Hong Kong where Cantonese is the major Chinese language used, it can be assumed that most of the first-generation Chinese immigrants of Canada are Cantonese speaking.

According to the census of 1981, there are at present about 224,030 who are of Chinese origin. As the total population of the whole country is 24,353,180, 1% of the

country's population was Chinese in 1981. This figure also indicates that there is a major increase of almost 90% in the Chinese population during the period of 1971 to 1981 in Canada. This can be seen by comparing the figure of 1971 which is 118,815 and the figure of 224,030 that is presented in the census of 1981. Over 60% of these immigrants are young; that is, within the age group of 18 to 35.

In O'Bryan, Reitz and Kuplowka's study (1976), more than 65% of first-generation immigrants were between the ages of 18 and 40. It would seem that Chinese immigrants are a comparatively young generation. Since most Chinese in Canada are first-generation immigrants with fluency in their mother tongue, it is not surprising in O'Bryan's study that 92.8% of the whole Chinese population in Canada reported full fluency in their ethnic language. As well, 92.9% of the population said that they use their native tongue every day either at work or at home. Given the similarity of the 1971 and 1981 Chinese population in Canada, in regards to age and generation of migration, it is perhaps reasonable to infer that similar percentages continue to be fluent in their ethnic languages. Statistics Canada data in 1981 show that there are 28,910 Chinese living in the province of Alberta and 12,395 living in the city of Edmonton.

Yu (1981) mentions that Chinese immigrants to Alberta are mostly from the Cantonese-speaking rural regions of

Guangdong Province of China. They emigrated in the wake of famine and political upheavals in their homeland. On arrival in the province, they were confronted with anti-Chinese sentiments and hostile realities, which made it necessary for them to band together in "Benevolent Societies" for self-preservation and protection. Yu also points out that stressful experiences of these Chinese also taught them to stay together, keep to themselves and to avoid trouble as much as possible. That is, the Chinese's rationale for their strong ethnic attachment has been to protect their ethnic boundary, to maintain their ancestral language and culture, to prevent being assimilated into the mainstream society, to provide a sense of ethnic identification and to protect themselves from discrimination. The existing well-established Chinatowns in most metropolitan centers of Europe and North America are good illustrations of Chinese unity. Toronto, for example, had 4,000 Chinese in 1951; by 1961 it had almost doubled with half living in Chinatown (Anderson & Frideres, 1981:164).

Yu (1981) further describes the Chinese in Alberta in depth. She says that there is a tendency for the Chinese newcomers to live in areas of the city where inexpensive housing is accessible. The more established tend to move to new areas of the city where they can rent or buy subsidized

housing. In Calgary, these Chinese tend to stay in the Northeast of the city while in Edmonton they tend to stay in Londonderry, Castledown, Millwoods and the West end.

According to Yu (1981), most Chinese people in Alberta are working class; middle-class Chinese-Albertan families exist but they are the minority of their population. In general, these middle-class families are young, university educated professionals and new immigrants of less than twelve years of residence in the province. Superficially, all these Chinese immigrants, especially the working class, try to adopt the Canadian way of life. Nevertheless, they still maintain many of their Chinese traditions, in terms of kinship and social activities.

It has been determined that the number in Edmonton rose from 5,110 in 1971 to 5,550 in 1973. According to Statistics Canada (1981), there were altogether 12,395 Chinese in Edmonton. That is, within the period of 1973 to 1981, the number of Chinese in the city has more than doubled.

Before we proceed to examine the Chinese-English bilingual programs of the selected metropolitan centers of the country and particularly the one in Edmonton, it may be worthwhile to first explore the different aspects of the Chinese language such as its different dialectal forms in order to understand these programs more thoroughly.

The Chinese Language

Chinese, with the inclusion of all the existing dialect forms, is probably the most widely extended form of speech that the world has known. It is the principal Asian language and is spoken by more people than any other language in the world. Before we proceed to deal with the different aspects of the Chinese language, it is necessary to consider some fundamental facts about language in general.

Very often, language serves as a barrier, rather than as a flexible and efficient means of communication. Even speakers of a particular language do not all speak the same language. According to Saville and Troike (1975), each individual with his or her unique linguistic experience speaks slightly different from others and such differentiated form of language is called ideolect. As a result of parental and peer influence in the course of growing up, the ideolects of people who have been in frequent communication since childhood will tend to be very similar, and will be quite different from the ideolects of people in other intercommunicating groups or in other different geographical regions.

Any group of similar ideolects differing from other comparable groups in features of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary is known as a dialect. A dialect is usually

defined as a branch of a common or parent language and it represents a variation. According to linguists, people within different dialect groups should be mutually intelligible. Otherwise, their language is considered to be from different language groups rather than from different dialect groups. A collection of similar dialects is called a language. Saville and Troike (1975) also state that all languages have dialects, and everyone speaks a dialect as there is no such thing as a "pure" language.

With regard to the Chinese language community individuals, like people from any other language community, do not speak exactly the same way. Such variations within a single language are usually called dialects. Chinese dialect differences, as a whole, are usually interpreted as indicators of real or imagined differences in education, religion, geographical region, social class, attitudes and other aspects of life. Nevertheless they have a great deal in common with one another; they originated from one parent language and they share the universal written form of ideography.

While seeing the different variations in the Chinese language as "dialects" according to the classical approach, such variations have recently been viewed as different "languages" according to linguists.* Even though these alternative versions are branches from the same parent

language, owing to the lack of mutual intelligibility between speakers of the different variations groups, linguists see such variations as different languages regardless of the fact that they share the same literary form.

Within China, the spoken variations of the Chinese language can be divided into roughly nine main groups: the Yu Group which includes speakers of the Guangdong Province, the Hakka Group of Northeastern Guangdong, the Amoy-Swatow Group, the Min Group which includes speakers of Foochow, the Wu Group of the southeastern provinces such as Soochow and Shanghai, the Hsiang Group of Hunan and finally the Mandarin Group which includes the Northern Mandarin, Southwestern Mandarin and the Southern Mandarin (see map on page 21).

The three groups of Mandarin versions differ in pronunciation and vocabulary. However, their differences are less than that between the Mandarin versions taken together, and any of the other groups of spoken variations.

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* Regardless of the linguist's definition of dialect, in this thesis, the different Chinese spoken variations will be termed different Chinese "dialects." This is due to the fact that the different variations originated from one parent language and are expressed in one universal written form.

These Mandarin versions are grouped and used as the national language of China as they are regarded by the Chinese as more linguistically sophisticated, refined, and as the elite language. The pronunciation of Peking accent is considered as the standard (Forrest, 1973).

Like any other country, in China, some groups of speakers will enjoy higher social prestige than others. Because of this, their language version or "dialects" will often come to be considered "better" than others. Also, "languages" or "dialects" spoken by the upper class of educated speakers in the most important urban centers, such as Peking of China, will easily become the de facto "standard" version. They will have higher status than any alternative versions of the language which is used by other different social classes and people from different geographical regions such as the rural areas.

Mandarin has been regarded as the "better," "standard" and "superior" version of the Chinese language mainly owing to the traditional pattern of economic, social and political domination. Other language versions or "dialects," lacking wider prestige and status, are usually considered as "non-standard." As a matter of fact, those so called "non-standard" versions such as Cantonese or Hakka are just as systematic and complete as the "standard" Mandarin and it

is only a matter of historical accident that one, rather than another, version becomes the "standard."

The other six language groups other than Mandarin are spoken mainly in the coastal and central regions. These groups are spoken by one-third of the Chinese speaking population of China in about one-quarter of the country's area. They differ from each other and from Mandarin which is spoken in the rest of China.

The six southern local vernaculars depart from the speech of the north extremely, in pronunciation, in idiom and in vocabulary. The people from different provinces may often find it hard to communicate with each other. It is as if they are speaking totally different languages. Although the spoken Chinese "dialects" are so different in the pronunciation of cognate words, they have seldom been regarded as different languages by the Chinese themselves mainly because of their universal literary form of characters. This is also the reason the Chinese believe that they share the same language, the same culture and belong to the same race, even though some of them may not be able to communicate with one another owing to the great differences in "dialects" used.

The written form of the Chinese language is universal for all different spoken versions in the sense that it is written in one common idiom and in one common system of

ideography. It is also this written language that serves as a means to bind together people of various vernaculars and enable them to communicate with one another within the country, as long as these people know how to read and write.

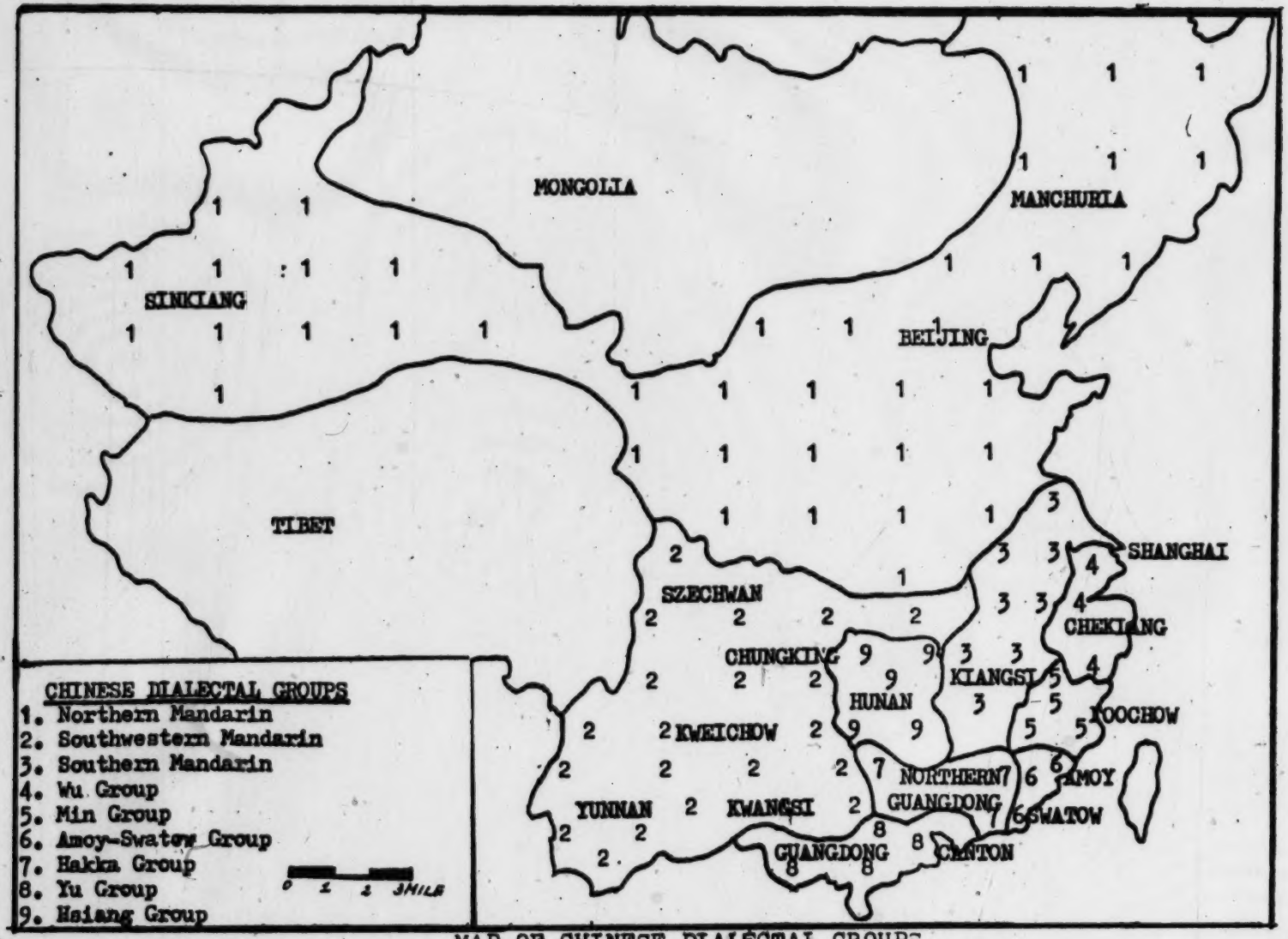
Among the nine groups of spoken versions, the Cantonese version of the Yu Group forms the largest linguistic community in North America. This is mainly caused by the large number of Chinese immigrants who came from Hong Kong and Guangdong during the last two decades, where Cantonese is the major version of communication.

People of all the nine different spoken versions groups, on the whole, practise common Chinese customs and culture. They share similar Chinese beliefs and Chinese traditional values. In addition to common practices, these groups have their own regional subcultures in other different aspects of life such as eating habits, religion, etc. However, these people identify themselves as "Chinese" or the "Han Race."

This introductory chapter attempts to give an overall picture of the development of bilingual education in North America, the Canadian Chinese population and their ethnic language. This background information hopefully will help make it possible to understand the later chapter about Edmonton Chinese parental attitudes towards the

Chinese-English Bilingual Program of the city and the program itself.

In the following chapter, a survey of the literature with regard to the cultural motives of bilingual schooling will be presented. In the latter part of this thesis, these cultural reasons will then be compared to those given by the Edmonton Chinese parents to see if they are congruent with each other.



MAP OF CHINESE DIALECTAL GROUPS

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ON BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Gaarder (1967) defines bilingual education as the concurrent use of two languages as media of instruction for a child in a given school in any or all of the school curriculum except the actual study of the languages themselves. In Canada, bilingual education implies instruction in both English and French or in one of those official languages and a minority language. However, as culturally the acquisition of an official or dominant language through bilingual schooling is quite different from the acquisition or maintenance of a minority language, this thesis will not attempt to deal with both cases. Instead, this work will concentrate on how parental attitudes and ethnic community influence affect ethnic language instruction in a bilingual program.

Gaarder (1967) proposes two types of bilingualism. They are "elitist bilingualism" and "societal bilingualism." "Elitist bilingualism" is acquired by one's own choice. The second language is often acquired through private tutoring or foreign languages school and its acquisition is mainly for prestige, status and self-enrichment. This form of bilingualism often serves as a status symbol for the

intellectual or elite class in most societies. According to Gaarder (1976), societal or folk bilingualism differs from elitist bilingualism in that the individual or the group is forced to learn a second language, usually the superordinate mainstream language, in order to survive socially and economically.

In fact, elitist bilingualism is similar to what has been called additive bilingualism. According to Lambert (1976), this type of bilingualism gives the students an additional opportunity to learn one more language other than the dominant language of the society or their own mother tongue for self-interest and self-enrichment. As Fishman (1976) suggests, such an enrichment bilingual program is for those who are relatively secure in their social, economic and political power. These people can afford and often seek an educational and cultural exposure in addition to their own ethnic language and immediate milieu. Thus, this type of bilingual program has been long and widely viewed by disadvantaged groups as "elitist."

Another predominant type of bilingualism "vernacular bilingualism" or a "group maintenance bilingual program" is suggested by Fishman (1976). This form of bilingualism focuses on instruction of the "mother tongue" of a certain ethnic group for the purpose of the preservation and enhancement of the group and its related language and

culture. It has generally been regarded as one means to maintain the language and culture of minority ethnic communities. Vernacular language, according to a UNESCO monograph, is defined as a language which is the mother tongue of a group when this group is socially or politically dominated by another group speaking in a different language or dialect of the same country. The language or the dialect of a minority in one country will not be considered as a vernacular if it is an official language of another country (1953:46). Based on this definition in the case of the Chinese-English bilingual education of Edmonton, "vernacular bilingualism" probably implies the teaching of the mainstream language and one of the various Chinese "dialects," except the official language of mainland China - Mandarin.

Bilingual education, from a cultural perspective, has often been associated with this "vernacular" or "group maintenance" type of bilingualism which aims at the preservation of ethnic culture and language. Supporters of these vernacular bilingual-bicultural programs hope to protect the cultural status of their communities and to gain social respect for their ethnic group. Observing the failure of the second and third generations of the minority to learn their own ethnic languages, ethnic communities strive for bilingual education which they think is one

important way to preserve their ethnic languages and cultures. It is also for this reason that until recently the teaching of ethnic languages was deemed to be the responsibility of the ethnic communities.

To have a better understanding of the ethnic communities' rationale for culture and language maintenance, we have to examine the cultural motives for such programs. Therefore, before we proceed to study the Chinese-English Bilingual School of Edmonton and the parental attitudes towards such a program, it is necessary to investigate the general cultural motives for bilingual education that have been suggested in the literature.

This chapter will review five specific reasons given by ethnic minorities for desiring bilingual education. They are as follows:

i) to maintain the culture and language of minority groups;

ii) to prevent intergenerational language and culture loss;

iii) to protect ethnic identities and to prevent assimilation;

iv) to promote acceptance and tolerance between majority and minority groups;

v) to preserve ethnic religious ties.

Language and Culture Maintenance

Language has always been considered closely related to culture. Before we look at their association, it is necessary first to study the definition of these two entities.

Culture is normally used by anthropologists to describe the total life pattern of a society. The ways in which men co-operate or conflict, their social and political institutions, their taboos, rituals and ceremonies, their ways of raising their younger generations, their shame and their ways of expression are all part of their culture (Bantock, 1973). Anderson and Frideres (1981) also point out that culture has traditionally been divided into material culture such as artifacts and non-material culture such as beliefs, customs, languages, mentifacts and social institutions. Both Bantock, and Anderson and Frideres' definitions include language or ways of expression as one of the important elements of culture. In fact, language is both viewed as a part of culture and as a means of encoding and transmitting cultural information.

Language, according to Sapir (1949), enables human beings to transcend the immediate given in their individual experiences and to join in a larger common understanding. This common understanding constitutes culture. Taylor (1950) further proposes that unless a child has gained

control of language or speech, his or her enculturation progress in other areas will be limited and hindered.

Dawson (1981) suggests that a society cannot be totally understood and appreciated without knowledge of its language. McQuown (1982) further points out that language is man's prime means of communication and is the principal tool through which one man passes on his personal and social integration, his cultural ways of behaving to his offspring and through which he induces his peers to share his culture and with him to form a larger social group.

A person is seen to learn his culture through his language and to express his culture when he uses his language. Goodenough (Hymes, 1964) states that a society's language is an important aspect of its culture and the relationship between the two is like that of a part to a whole. Based on this logic, changes in one aspect of culture, such as changes in language, will lead to changes in the culture itself. In short, language retention is an important aspect of culture retention; without language, culture can hardly be maintained.

According to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1969), language allows for self-expression and communication according to one's own logic. Thus, those who care about their cultural heritages, also care about their ancestral language. This explanation illustrates one

of the major reasons given by minority communities which provide strong support for the establishment of bilingual education programs that include the instruction of their ancestral tongue.

One of the most inclusive statements concerning ethnic language and culture maintenance in the bilingual programs is made by Spolsky in Frontiers of Bilingual Education (1977). He states that:

> The actual goals of bilingual education call for a recognition of the child's home culture and its inclusion as part of the instructional program. Language and culture are inextricably interwoven and language is the most identifiable and basic exponent of a culture. Besides language, the bilingual educational programs often incorporates other cultural elements of the children's home, be it music, cuisine or folklore (p. 238).

In this statement, Spolsky implies that bilingual schooling not only provides instruction of the mainstream language and the minorities' mother tongues, but also incorporates cultural elements of the minority groups. Thus, through such a pattern, bilingual education is the means to cultural and language maintenance for ethnic minorities.

In the above discussion, "ethnic language" usually refers to a single "dialect," "mother tongue" or "vernacular" of minority groups in a society where there is a dominant or superordinate language. However, in some language cases when the minority language has more than one form (either written or spoken), "ethnic language" of a

minority group could refer to all the different versions of written and spoken forms of that parent language. The Chinese language, perhaps, is a good example to illustrate this case. Even though there are many different spoken versions or "dialects" in the Chinese language, the "ethnic language" of an individual who is of Chinese origin is not necessarily his "mother tongue" dialect or "vernacular." The universal written language and the different versions of spoken language may all be considered his ethnic language.

Based on the above definition of "ethnic language," no matter what language version of a minority language is being taught together with the mainstream language in a bilingual program, the bilingual program can achieve the purpose of culture and ethnic language preservation. This implies that bilingual education in which the official ethnic language is used can maintain the culture of minorities whose "mother tongue" is a country's dialect rather than the official national ethnic language.

Chinese-English bilingual education is perhaps a good illustration; but it is also a unique case. This type of bilingual program which provides the instruction of English and the Chinese language (no matter which dialect: Cantonese, Shanghainese, Mandarin, etc.) can help the Chinese younger generation to maintain their ethnic culture. This is so because even though the Chinese language has many

different spoken versions, people all read and write the same universal literary form. As a matter of fact, the Chinese identify the universal written form of the language as their common "ethnic language" and their various spoken versions are seen as only an indication of which province they originated from.

Also, the Chinese have a strong ethnic identification in general. No matter which dialect they speak, they generally see themselves as a member of the Chinese race or people. They may be quite "regional conscious" in the sense that they identify their regional difference by speaking different "dialects"; however, they still class everybody who practises similar customs and use the Chinese written language as "Chinese." Thus, no matter which spoken version of the Chinese language is taught in a bilingual program, the Chinese population may still see it as serving the objectives of "ethnic language" maintenance.

Therefore, in the case of Chinese-English bilingual education, the instruction in one of the Chinese dialects which is not the "vernacular" of the students may not help the students to maintain their "mother tongue" or help in communication with other ethnic community members or older relatives. However, the Chinese population on the whole may still believe that this type of bilingual schooling can help

the students to maintain their "ethnic language" and culture.

As a matter of fact, the most common rationale for the desirability of non-official language use or ethnic language preservation is actually its value in maintaining group traditions and its value in communication with other group members. Support for the maintenance of minority languages, together with the mainstream language instruction of English in the school system, appears to be widespread among Canadian metropolitan ethnic groups. O'Bryan, Reitz and Kuplowska, in their survey of ethnic groups' desirability of ethnic language retention, found that out of 57,636 Chinese in their sample, there were 22,388 who think that it is "very desirable" to preserve their ethnic language. The data also show that while 38.8% have shown a "very desirable" attitude, another 40.3% reveal a "somewhat desirable" attitude. This suggests that in this study there was an overwhelming majority of almost 80% in favor of ethnic language retention among the Chinese.

In the above study, the Chinese are the group which has the highest percentage in favor of ethnic language maintenance, while learning the mainstream language. Among all the minority groups of Canada, the Greeks show a second highest percentage in support of ethnic language retention (over 80% of the Greek population also favor ethnic language

maintenance). At the lower end of interest in ethnic language maintenance are the Dutch and the Scandinavian population in Canada. About half of these groups favor ethnic language preservation but only 15% of the Dutch population and 13% of the Scandinavian population indicate a "very desirable" attitude towards it.

O'Bryan, Reitz and Kuplowska (1976:2) also state that some minority groups do retain their cultural traits despite loss of their native tongue. However, only part of their original cultural traits or customs are retained which again implies that language cannot be dissociated. If a person wants to maintain culture, he or she has to preserve the language as well. They do not, however, provide any information on Chinese attitudes towards learning vernacular or elite Chinese dialects; perhaps they were unaware of the major differences in the Chinese language.

Prevention of Intergenerational Language and Culture Shift

Intergenerational language and culture loss or shift is a prevailing phenomenon within minority ethnic groups in North America. In a study of ethnic orientation in Canada among people of Ukrainian origin, C. W. Hobart (1966) found that children of immigrant parents reject "very much" their parents' culture and language. By rejecting their parents' customs and culture, they automatically must also reject

their native tongue. To be "pure Canadian" perhaps makes it easier for these immigrant children to obtain acceptance among their peers. Because of this phenomenon, parents of the minority groups are worried that the younger generation will be assimilated to the mainstream culture and language. They are afraid that their own culture and language will be totally lost after a few generations. Therefore, one way to prevent intergenerational ethnic culture and language loss is to advocate a type of education which incorporates the teaching of ethnic language and culture, while the official language of English and the dominant culture are being taught.

Spolsky (1978) points out that different stages and degrees of assimilation, which severely affect several generations of immigrants, can be represented by the various levels of linguality or language fluency. His paradigm of language shift is as follows:

Immigrating Generation	:	Immigrant Language (New Language)
Children	:	Native Language + New Language
Grandchildren	:	New Language (Native Language)
Great Grandchildren:	:	New Language

When the immigrants first come to a new country, they will continue to use their mother tongue at home. They learn and speak the new language only when it is required at work or outside home. Unless these new immigrants have

previous knowledge of the new language, this generation at most will be only pseudo bilingual, which is shown in the above table by the use of parentheses around "New Language." According to Lieberson (1970), even if the parents are bilingual, the offsprings often adopt a new mother tongue which is usually the dominant language of the society. However, mother tongue may be transferred to the next generation, so that they are fully bilingual. In the second and third generation, immigrant children will probably use very little of or even no longer use their native tongue. In the third generation, their first language will be the new language; in the fourth generation, the new language will be their only language.

Goldstein and Bienvenue (1980) further emphasize that language retention is the main theme of ethnic politics of Canada. As the conditions required for perpetuating the old kinship system do not exist in Canada, the rise of a new generation often brought drastic changes to the conventional life of the ethnic communities. Spokesmen for ethnic minorities view with alarm the failure of the second and third generations to learn their ethnic language.

However, in a differentiated society, differences and conflicts between generations tend to be increased especially in immigrant groups. The transmission of a way of life depends very much upon the acceptance of a total

system of institutions and such a system can only rarely be transmitted intact to a new land. In Canada, the retention rate of ancestral languages varies substantially from one cultural group to another and from generation to generation. The communities of the Hutterites and the Mennonites seem to have the most complete transfer and within these two groups, generational conflicts are therefore less severe.

O'Bryan, Reitz and Kuplowska (1976:165-172) in their large Canadian study, substantially agree with Spolsky and Leiberson, but they come to an even more pessimistic conclusion. They found that seven out of ten immigrants reported full fluency in their native tongue. But in many ethnic groups, fluency is reported by only one in ten of the second generation and has disappeared entirely in the third or subsequent generations. They conclude that generational transition is a powerful force in language loss.

As the use of the mother tongue is rapidly reduced from the second generation, minority groups see that the only way to avoid such phenomenon is to educate their children about their own culture and language. The teaching of ethnic languages together with the mainstream language in a bilingual program is believed to be of much help in preventing the intergenerational language and culture loss within ethnic minority communities.

Protection of Ethnic Identities

It is believed that the North American 'melting pot' mentality has chiefly led to the destruction or disappearance of ethnic languages and cultures in the United States. Cruel anti-foreign, pro-Anglo-Saxon and anti-minority forces have asserted a strong influence in North American history. In other words, the chief "Americanization" forces in the past have been ruining the uniqueness of the minorities, their identities and blending them imperceptibly into the new nation.

Justification of bilingual programs also includes social justice claims by groups that are conquered, suppressed or that have suffered from severe discrimination. These groups obviously have a strong determination to reinforce ethnic attachment for their own security and protection, and to rebuild their own ethnic identities. The Navajos of the United States serve as a good example to illustrate this argument. People of this tribe mainly use their ancestral language in their daily life. Their children speak almost no English when they first begin school. To these tribes, bilingual schools offer an opportunity to retain their native culture and language while introducing the students to the English-speaking world.

In some other groups, as the children speak English as

their first language, bilingual education may provide a useful opportunity to introduce ancestral languages and traditions to the young Indians. Many tribes of North America, as a matter of fact, welcome this way of maintaining their cultural identity. As many of them have lost their native language fluency and ancestral customs and traditions over the last two hundred years owing to the native language suppression by the dominant linguistic and political system, they would like to see their language taught in school as a means of reinforcing cultural traditions and asserting tribal identities.

Joshua Fishman's Language Loyalty in the United States of 1966 is a monumental work in the field of bilingual education. It not only aroused the society's opinion against the long accepted idea of America being the great 'melting pot' but also stimulated the society's interest in the preservation of minority vernaculars. Native languages spoken by the Chinese, Indians, Mexicans and blacks, etc. were revalued both by the ethnic communities themselves and by the government.

Since language spoken by family and friends is of such importance in the formation of one's identity, the desire for the retention of one's culture and language has become prevalent. Modiano (1972:87) points out that a person's language is inexorably tied to the image of himself. That

is so because language not only serves as a bridge of communication, but also indicates a person's reference group. Therefore, the preservation of one's identity, as long as it is bound in with the identity of the ethnic community, means the maintenance of one's native tongue. That is, bilingual education with the learning of one's ethnic language and culture would ensure for the minorities a sense of security and protection derived from identification with his kin group.

The Cuban community of New Mexico is a good example to illustrate the above idea. It is more successful than most other immigrant groups in maintaining their institutions and their language. However, as time goes on, it becomes more and more difficult for the younger generation to resist the acculturation which contact with the English-speaking North American majority eventually produced. The increasing contact with the North American society brings a corresponding increase in the role of English in the daily life of the Cuban refugees and long-term problems of Spanish maintenance.

Although Spanish is the language most frequently used in the majority of Cuban refugees' homes, the maintenance of Spanish continues to be a problem. Since very few Anglo-Americans speak Spanish, Cubans have to learn English and use it more and more. Also, the younger they are, the

more bilingual and English speaking they are. Besides, it is very difficult to deny Cuban children contact with the North American culture and its economic and social advantages.

C. Christian Jr. (1976) provides a social-psychological explanation by pointing out that children of minorities are subject to constant pressures to identify with members of the dominant group as a condition for personal and social success. They may consider identification with family and friends as secondary in importance to identification with members of the majority needed to achieve social mobility. Providing a more structural explanation, Lamy (1975) infers that bilinguals in groups where competition is high, where there are two cultural groups and where one group is dominant, will lack a strong sense of group identity. They will be less ethnocentric, which implies that they will feel less group loyalty, and finally will be easily assimilated to the dominant group of the society.

As a whole, minority groups who give the strongest support to bilingual education are those who view the decreasing use of ethnic language as a "very serious problem" of their communities (O'Bryan, Reitz and Kuplowska, 1976). Also, they are the ones who see that language and culture preservation is the most important task that they have to deal with.

Lewis (1980:255) suggests that bilingual education can promote ethnic identity by making explicit and maintaining differences between groups. Epstein (1977) also terms bilingual education policy as "affirmative ethnicity" in which supporters of such policy or programs are seeking government financed and government promoted ethnic languages and cultures in the public school system. He suggests that bilingual education has always been regarded as a means of cultural and tribal affirmation. Through bilingual schooling, which incorporates the teaching of the minority's and the majority's languages and cultures, the advocates or supporters hope to obtain protection for their ethnic boundary and to help their younger generation develop a positive ethnic identification. They feel that this is the only way to prevent assimilation of their Canadian born descendants into the mainstream society.

Another major reason for bilingual schooling given by bilingual education advocates is that there is a lack of respect encountered for their mother tongue and that it is not sufficiently taught in the regular public schools. Such people point out that if the "outside school" does not respect the ethnic languages by offering them as languages of instruction, then how can "insiders," particularly the younger generation, respect their own languages and have positive identification with their ethnic community (Fishman

and Nahirny in Fishman 1966:122). Leonard Covello, the first Italian American to become a principal in New York schools, describes his school days like this:

> The Italian language was completely ignored in the American schools...we soon got the idea that Italian meant something inferior, and a barrier was erected between children of Italian origin and parents. This was the accepted process of Americanization. We were becoming Americans by learning how to be ashamed of our parents (Cranston, 1974).

Furthermore, there is a widespread feeling that the failure of prior efforts in the language education of minority children is mainly caused by the negative perception of speakers of languages other than English and their accompanying rejection through the values expressed by the curriculum of the school system (Epstein, 1976). For this reason, minority groups believe that in order to prevent such failure and have their younger generation respect their own languages and cultures, they must have their languages respected and taught together with the dominant language in the school system.

One of the major attitudinal claims put forward for bilingual education is that it encourages the minority's children's positive identification and self-respect, to discover that their own home tongue with which they have strong association is associated or at least not maligned by the society or the school system.

Saville and Troike (1971) however point out that one possible consequence of being bilingual is that major conflicts in values may arise. They suggest that in a conventional English dominant school system, one of the first impressions a non-English minority child may have is that people in authority do not speak or respect his or her language. That child may thus perceive a conflict between family and friends against the school system. He or she may also be hesitant to identify with his or her own ethnic group which is perceived as being disrespected by the majority. As language is considered one of the most important mediating factors in the development of self-concept (C. C. Christian, Jr., 1976), it is very important for the child to develop a positive opinion towards his own language and culture.

The language that the minority children use will influence not only the way they perceive themselves but also the way they are perceived in the community. Such perceptions are of great importance, as the attitudes of the home and community towards bilingualism and towards the respective language groups affect significantly the attitudes of the students. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that there is a strong feeling in the Chinese younger generation to reject their own cultural heritage, particularly their language, and adopt a more conventional

way of behavior. According to Yu (1981), in the Chinese families, most of the time, the children are well cared for emotionally and physically but there exists a cultural and intellectual gap between the home environment and mainstream Canadian life.

This gap very often becomes a problem when these children reach school age and enter school. Owing to differences in language, expectation and values, there frequently arise problems of adaptation and adjustment. For these minority students, the urge to become a part of, or to belong to, the mainstream society is overwhelming. Yu (1981) further mentions that the minority parents on one hand wish to maintain a cultural tradition while on the other hand their children have to resolve and cope with the cultural differences between their own ethnic minority community and the majority host community. Yu (1981) concludes by saying that "the psychological dilemmas that are imposed on those children are often demanding: to choose between loyalty to the parents and to their peer group."

In order to prevent situations like the one mentioned above, bilingual education is seen as necessary and important. The primary thrust, or one of the major goals, of bilingual schooling is to help the children who do not speak English as their mother tongue to develop an awareness

of and a pride in their culture and an understanding of the majority's culture while simultaneously learning to communicate effectively in their own languages as well as in English. As Cranston (1974) suggests, a model bilingual program should treat the minority children whose mother tongue is not English as advantaged, not disadvantaged. It should also provide to the child a full understanding of and a deep respect for his cultural heritage. This is similar to the reasons for establishing bilingual education that Gaarder has offered. Gaarder (Carey, 1974) points out that the cultural motive for bilingual education is both to strengthen the bonds between community and family, and to avoid the alienation from family and linguistic community that is commonly the price of rejection of one's own native tongue and of complete assimilation into the superordinate linguistic group.

The use of the home language as a medium of instruction in school also gives it a status of prestige and enhances the minority child's self-respect and self-confidence. A most important aspect is the child's acceptance of self combined with acceptance of his minority group membership. If minority children do not have self-acceptance and feel their own minority group acceptance, they will develop a strongly negative self-image and will reject identification with their own ethnic group. Therefore, in order to lay the

foundation for a minority child's growth as a secure, self-assured and well-balanced person who can make a positive contribution to both his ethnic community and to society as a whole, a cultural component of a bilingual program which teaches acceptance and respect for the cultural values of his own ethnic group is necessary with bilingual education. The children may feel help, support and guidance and are thus better able to make the transition to become active and participative learners.

Members of low socio-economic status ethnic communities also give "protection of ethnic identification" as one of the major reasons for their support of bilingual schooling. These members who are deprived of economic and social security, suffering from low self-esteem and lack of opportunity for social mobility, are said to cling to their own traditions, customs and language in order to shore up their embattled self-image (Lamerand in Dubois, 1977:73). They would like very much to have their children keep on using their language and develop a strong ethnic identification for the sake of security in a dominant English speaking majority society.

In summary, bilingual schooling is presented as an ethnic centered program which not only informs the child about his own cultural background while simultaneously teaching the culture and language of the majority, but also

helps him to build up pride and respect towards his own linguistic and cultural heritage. This obviously will not only help in the preservation and solidarity of the minority group's culture and language boundary but also protect their own cultural identification from being threatened by the dominant majority. Therefore, in the final analysis, the importance of self-image and positive ethnic identification may be the most important outcome of bilingual education. Van Multitz (1975) in Spolsky's Frontiers of Bilingual Education (1976) states:

> The concepts and practices involved in bilingual-bicultural education projects have as a major goal leading students to believe in themselves, in their basic worth as human beings, and in their native capacities. One important factor in reinforcing these pupils' self-confidence is having the language they speak acknowledged and respected; another is having teachers and models whom they can emulate, persons who use that language and stem from the same community as their pupils (p. 241).

Promotion of Acceptance and Tolerance Between Different Races

Kungas and Lewins (1981) suggest that among immigrants, ethnic bilingual schools are seen not only as promoting multiculturalism and preserving their culture by perpetuating ethnic languages. They are also seen as promoting ethnic equality by making the dominant group of the society more aware and tolerant of different ethnic groups.

By advocating bilingual education, ethnic communities further hope that the majority culture will have a chance to know their cultures and languages better and thus will have a more positive attitude towards them. As Moss (1979) points out, as people in the society become progressively more bilingual, their attitude towards that group of minorities will become more positive. This can be seen from the St. Lambert French Immersion Program of Quebec. In Lambert's 1972 study of English speaking children who enroll in this French Immersion Program, it is found that after a few years these children become much more sympathetic towards the French and identify to some degree with that culture.

However, adopting that second identity need not and does not imply foregoing the first one, which is what many people fear. Instead it means acquiring a duality which can be viewed as language enrichment. As a matter of fact, this type of bilingualism is termed as "additive bilingualism" by Lambert (1977). The additive form of bilingualism is when both languages have social value in each setting. It will not replace the functions of the mother tongue; instead, it will only enrich the child's experience by providing an extra kind of conceptual tool.

Lewis (1980:255) suggests that bilingual education helps to eliminate ethnocentrism by promoting tolerance

between different ethnic groups and advocates respect towards each other among the different races.

For the ethnic communities, if bilingual education has achieved the purpose of promoting tolerance and acceptance between the dominant English speaking majority and the ethnic minorities, their ethnic cultures and languages will easily be maintained. It is because their ethnic boundary will be secured and protected and they will not be threatened or discriminated against by the majority as being the minority of the society. Therefore, in order to preserve ethnic languages and cultures, children of the majority should also be educated in accepting others who are from different or minority ethnic backgrounds. If the majority do not accept the difference in minorities, it will be very hard for the ethnic groups to accept themselves as being the minorities of the society.

Preservation of Ethnic Religious Ties

Lastly, the final reason for maintaining the ethnic language is to maintain ethnic religious ties among members of the minority groups. These minority groups are afraid that their religion would break down if their ethnic languages are lost. The best examples of such communities would be religious enclaves such as the Hutterites and Doukhabors. Other ethnic communities which maintain group

solidarity through ethnic religious bonds also fear that if their religious ties are weakened, their community solidarity will disappear.

Many ethnic religious organizations even provide language programs for their children to make sure that they have the opportunity to learn their own ethnic language so that they can participate actively in their religion. A good example is the two Chinese Churches' Chinese Language Programs in Edmonton. These programs are offered to ensure that children can have the opportunity to preserve their ancestral tongue so that they can participate actively in church functions and have a stronger religious bond or, as a whole, a stronger ethnic community bond.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, language and culture loss are often seen as one of the most serious problems facing ethnic groups and out of sentimental elements or other cultural factors, ethnic groups regard the establishment of bilingual educational progrms an important way of helping their children develop incentive to preserve their language and culture. Such programs should include the teaching of the mainstream language and the ancestral tongue of the minority groups.

The above chapter attempts to delineate

bilingual-bicultural education as a phenomenon significantly dependent upon cultural factors. Cultural arguments such as the preservation of ethnic languages and cultures, prevention of intergenerational language and culture loss or shift, protection of ethnic identities, promotion of acceptance and tolerance between minority groups and the majority, and finally, the maintenance of ethnic religious ties were presented as one of the major sets of rationale for establishing bilingual-bicultural ethnic schools.

This chapter is based on a survey of the literature. To further understand the phenomenon of bilingual education, an actual case approach may be of value. Therefore, in the following chapters, a case study of the Edmonton Chinese community in relation to its bilingual school will be carried out. Part of that case study will be a survey of Chinese parents' attitudes towards Chinese-English education, conducted in order to have a better understanding of the cultural perspective of bilingual education in general. The second part of the study will be a review of the Chinese-English Bilingual School.

CHAPTER III

CHINESE PARENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS BILINGUAL SCHOOLS

Having reviewed the literature on ethnic group maintenance and parental attitudes towards bilingual education, the next question is, what are the attitudes of Chinese parents in Edmonton towards such type of education? Do they favor it as the literature has predicted? If so, are their reasons similar to those presumed in the literature? If not, what kinds of reasons do they give?

Approach to the Study

The study described here is an exploratory study, not based on a random sampling procedure. The respondents are forty Chinese families from Edmonton with both parents of Chinese origin and children of school age (k - 12). These families were chosen through personal contact with the Chinese community of the city and on the basis of their willingness to participate in the survey.

The information was gathered through personal open-ended interviews. Interviews were conducted in Chinese (Cantonese) and were both unstructured and open-ended. The purpose of the interviewing was to:

i) gather information regarding their attitudes

towards the Chinese-English bilingual education;

ii) gather information regarding their attitude towards the preservation of Chinese culture and language in North America;

iii) find out the Chinese parents' opinion towards the teaching of Mandarin/Cantonese in the Chinese bilingual schools of Edmonton;

iv) explore the Chinese parents' reasons for having their children learn Chinese.

As the survey was limited to a small sample, the same person conducted all the interviews. Unstructured or open ended interviews were applied in the survey because they can explore certain areas more fully than structured interviews. They can also add new areas which have not been previously identified or even change the scope of the study. Unstructured interviews are best in obtaining information concerning attitudes and opinions which are difficult to elicit through structured interviews, schedules or questionnaires (Galfo & Miller, 1965:35).

In these interviews, a set of questions were designed before hand in order to promote discussion and to encourage interviewees to talk while concomitantly providing a focus of attention. The interviews were started with general questions and moved to more specific ones in order to be as free flowing as possible. By doing this, the respondents

were encouraged to open up more and explain their attitudes or opinions more fully and freely. Additional questions were also raised by the interviewer during the interviews to make sure that the desired information had been obtained.

Field notes were taken so that the interviewer could reconstruct the more specific conditions of the interviews and to retain as much information as possible for data analysis..

Although this research process formally limits generalizability of findings, it is appropriate for an exploratory study. On the basis of this work, it would be possible to design a more expensive and elaborate research procedure: until work such as this thesis is completed, such research would produce many blind alleys. This is a first step in understanding bilingual schooling in the Chinese community in Canada, but only a first step.

Results

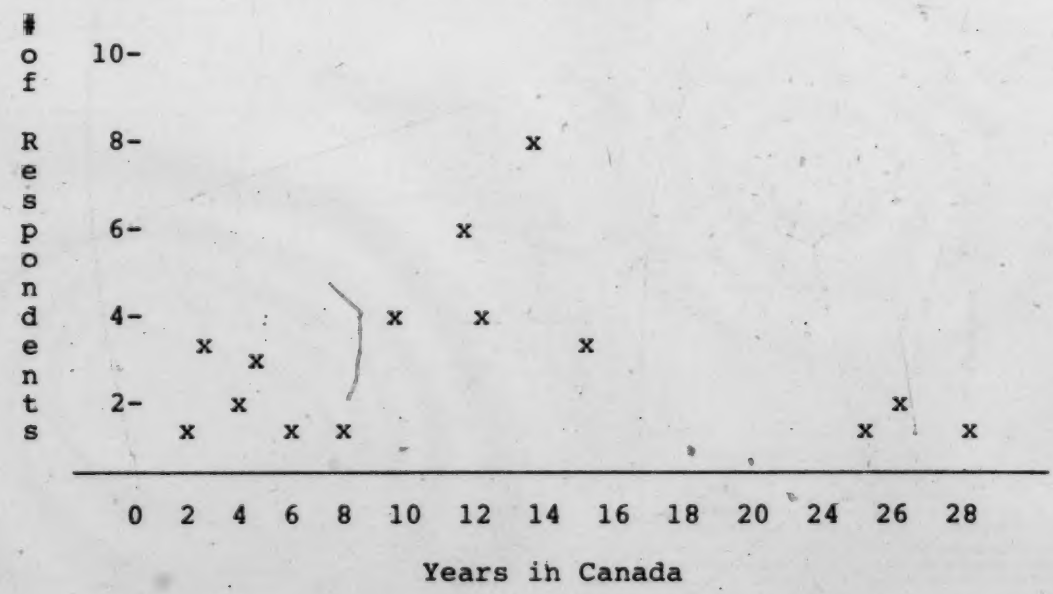
The data collected in the interviews will be summarized and presented in the latter part of this chapter. These answers will include data describing the respondents' and the interviewees' attitudes towards Chinese bilingual schooling. As forty families have been interviewed, there are altogether forty answers to each interview question with the description or answer of the father being taken as

representative of the household. Also, in some cases where the father and the mother have different opinions and data, eighty answers to that particular question will be expected.

I. Description of Respondents

The families that were interviewed have lived in Canada for a period ranging from one year to twenty-eight years. Out of forty families, four have lived in Canada for more than twenty-four years, while nine have been here for not more than six years. The majority fall in the category of nine to fourteen years as shown in the following distribution.

Figure 1: Number of Years Respondents Lived in Canada



The data presented above shows the number of years that the fathers have been living in Canada. The fathers' data are taken as representative of the whole household. As a matter of fact, the data collected are congruent with statistical data of 1973 (O'Bryan, Reitz and Kuplowska 1976:37). In 1973, after the federal relaxation on the immigration policy, it was found that the largest percentage, 35.1%, of the Chinese population had been in Canada for less than four years. This group would now have been in Canada for ten to fifteen years.

Among the forty families, thirty-six of them are first-generation immigrants, three of them are second-generation and one is third-generation immigrant. Out of these forty interviewees, fourteen have received university education and have become immigrants after graduation, while twelve of them are immigrants who came to the country as employees with special technical skills and specialized training. Four of these respondents are Canadian born while ten of them are refugees with two from Vietnam and eight from China.

With regard to the interviewees' religious affiliation, eighteen of them (45%) are Roman Catholic, eight families (20%) are Protestant and fourteen (35%) have no religious affiliation. Among those families who are not religiously affiliated, ten of them are the refugee families and four of

them are the Canadian born Chinese families. Among all the interviewees, all first-generation immigrants except refugees, are affiliated with a Christian religion.

Only four families that were interviewed are living with grandparents. They are the Canadian born respondents. They speak both English and Cantonese to their relatives at home while their grandparents usually speak only Cantonese. Another three families are living with brothers and sisters and the rest of the respondents are all nuclear families, without extended family members living with them. All forty families, except the four Canadian born respondents who speak both English and Cantonese, speak mainly Cantonese at home.

The respondents were also asked about the highest level of schooling that they have completed. The data are as follows:

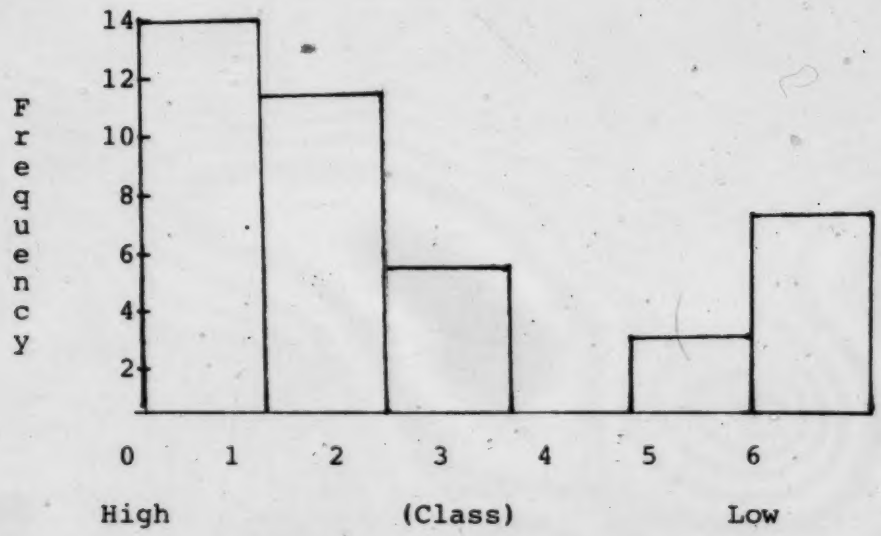
Figure 2: Educational Level of Father and Mother

Educational Level	Father	Mother
Post-Graduate	3	0
University	17	15
Post-Secondary	6	9
High School	6	8
Junior High School	6	3
Elementary School	2	5
	40	40

Other than educational level, data concerned with fathers' occupation were also collected in order to determine which socio-economic class the respondents belong to. The respondents' occupational level and their families' socio-economic status are measured by the Blishen occupational class scale. In this scale, occupations are coded into the first two digits. Census occupational titles are ranked in terms of the education and income characteristics of those in the occupation as well as prestige of the occupations derived from a national survey of the public's evaluation of occupations. The entire Blishen scale for census occupation ranges from 25 to 77 and thus has properties of an ordinal scale. Class I, the highest, includes occupations scoring 70 or more; Class II: 60-69; Class III: 50-59; and so on to Class VI: less than 29.

Figure 3 provides the frequencies of each category in the scale of the subjects, according to the Blishen scale, in which only the fathers' occupation is considered.

Figure 3: Fathers' Occupation



The Blishen scores of the respondents range from Class I to Class VI (except Class IV with no one falling in this category). The average score is 2.7 or in between Class II and Class III. It is therefore concluded that the majority of the subjects in this survey were an upper middle and middle class socio-economic standing. Over 35% of the fathers were either chemical, mechanical or civil engineers, two of them were doctors and about 25% of them were engaged in business or management fields.

In relating to the age distribution of the respondents, 60% of the parents belong to the age group 25-34, 30% belong to the group 35-44 and 10% to other age groups. The distribution is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Age Distribution of Respondents

AGE GROUP	FATHER(40)	MOTHER(40)
-25	0	2
25-34	24	22
35-44	11	13
45-54	5	3

All interviewees indicated that most of their friends are of Chinese origin. "Most" here implies at least 70%. Eight families say that almost 90% of the people they know are Chinese. These are the refugee families who may be assumed to have limited knowledge of the English language and thus remain within their own community. All the families that were interviewed further point out that their Chinese friends speak both Cantonese and English. Some may not be very fluent in English, yet they know at least a little bit. None of the respondents indicated that they have close friends who are not Chinese or who do not speak their mother tongue. Even the four Canadian born respondents claim that most of their friends are Canadian born Chinese who speak both Cantonese and English.

In addition, thirty-one families indicated that Cantonese is the language they often use in their social circle while nine of them indicated that both English and Cantonese are used equally. Among these nine families, four are the Canadian born respondents who claim that English is often used in talking to Chinese friends who are Canadian born like themselves. These four families indicated that English is often used in their social circle while Cantonese is often used at home.

When these parents were asked about the language they often use at work, thirty families indicated that English is the main language they use in their work place. Eight of the other families are working either in Chinese restaurants or Chinese grocery stores and thus the language they often use in their work place is Chinese (Cantonese). Again, these are the refugee families who may have little knowledge of English and thus can only work in places where Chinese is the major language of communication. Two of these respondents claimed that they speak only a little bit of English in their work place even though the main language of communication there is English. That fact is mainly due to their limited knowledge of English.

The collected data further reveals that there is a strong bond among the Chinese population, in the sense that they like very much to stay together and form their own

groups. Seventy-five per cent (thirty families) said that there are some other Chinese living in their residential area. Five families were not sure if there are any and the other five said that there are none. Among the thirty respondents who have Chinese living close to them, eighteen of them have either close or frequent contacts with the Chinese neighbors. Ten of these families also claimed that the neighbors with whom they have close contacts are their relatives. These ten families included three Canadian born respondents and seven refugee families.

Moreover, the Catholic respondents (eighteen families) of the survey belong to the Chinese Catholic community of Edmonton while the Protestant respondents (eight families) belong to either the Chinese Alliance Church or the Chinese United Church of the city. Seven families indicated that they belong to some of the social and cultural associations of the Chinese community in Chinatown. Among all the forty families, only seven do not belong to any of these ethnic associations in the city. This whole picture indicates that the majority of the Chinese population have a strong bond with their ethnic community in Edmonton.

All the respondents, except the four Canadian born families, have high fluency in their ethnic Chinese language. These four exceptions described themselves as being semi-fluent in their spoken dialect of Cantonese, but

having no knowledge in reading and writing the language of Chinese. The other thirty-six families claimed that they are fluent in both their spoken dialect of Cantonese and the written language. Among the eighty respondents (both father's and mother's answers are counted separately), seven of them have very little knowledge in English and twelve of them are taking Basic English as a second language through the continuing education program of the city. These nineteen respondents are the refugees from China who have been in the country for less than three years. The rest of the families believe that they are quite fluent in the English language and can communicate without any difficulties.

Lastly, none of the interviewees indicated that their family type is "Westernized Canadian." Thirteen of them are "traditional Chinese" while twenty-seven describe themselves as "in between."

Given the personal data of the respondents, we can see that the findings have certain implications for the implementation of the Edmonton Chinese-English Bilingual Program. The strong ethnic attachment of the Chinese population in the city may perhaps make one assume that these Chinese families will have full co-operation and enthusiasm in supporting any institutions or programs that can help to maintain their ethnic boundary, culture and

language. Also, as the majority of the Chinese population in the city is Cantonese speaking it can also be assumed that Cantonese will be the dialect of instruction in the Chinese-English Bilingual Program of Edmonton in order to serve the purpose of "mother tongue" maintenance.

In order to see if the above assumptions are valid, it is necessary to explore the respondents' attitudes towards the dialects of instruction and the establishment of Chinese-English bilingual schooling. In the next section of this chapter, the Chinese parental attitudes towards the Chinese-English bilingual schooling, Chinese culture and language maintenance and the dialects of instruction of the Chinese-English bilingual program will be presented.

II. Description of Chinese Parents' Attitudes Towards Chinese Bilingual Schooling

The second part of the results concerns the interviewees' attitudes towards the Chinese-English bilingual schooling in general. As this part of the answers presented the subjects' opinions, there may be more than one possible answer to each question for both respondents.

All the respondents indicated that they would like very much to have their children know their ethnic language - both the universal written language and the spoken version. They would prefer their vernacular of Cantonese or the

national language of Mandarin. When they were asked to give their reasons, twenty-six out of forty said, "We are Chinese; we ought to know our language and culture." These respondents are all first-generation immigrants.

Thirty-eight families feel that it is very important for their children to learn about their own ethnic language for the sake of culture and values maintenance. These subjects feel that no matter what form of spoken version their children know, as long as they know how to read and write the universal written language, the Chinese culture can be retained. Thus, they indicated they would prefer either Cantonese or Mandarin as the former is the "mother tongue" while the latter is the "national" language.

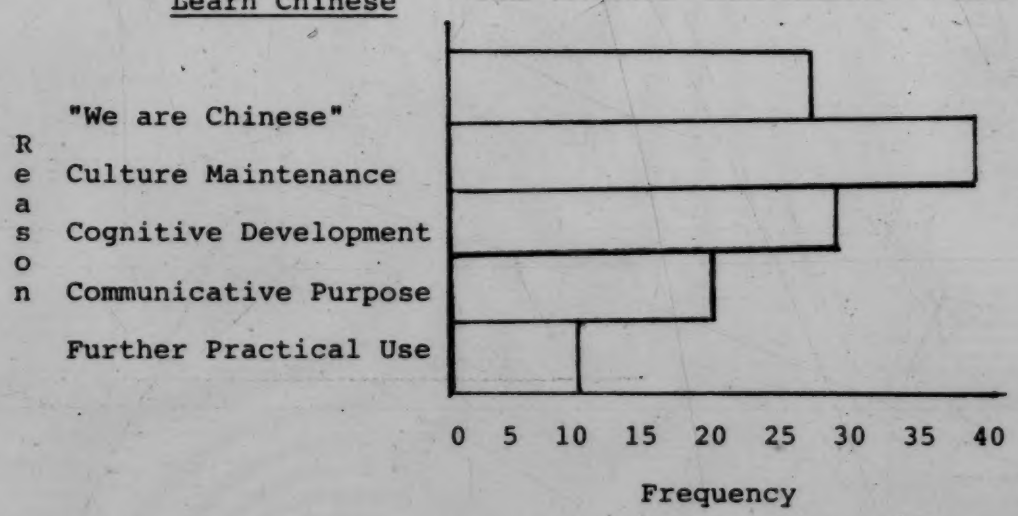
Twenty-eight subjects, which included the second- and third-generation respondents, believe that it is always better to be bilingual than unilingual, as their children will learn more and will be exposed to a larger field of experience by learning one more language. They also feel that bilingualism is advantageous for the children's cognitive development. Twenty of them feel that if their children know both English and Chinese, they can have a larger social group. They cannot only communicate with the majority of the society but also communicate with their own relatives and community. Ten even think that since Chinese is the biggest population in the world, it is very useful to

learn Chinese for future practical use or other practical reasons, although it may not be particularly practical in Canada.

On the whole, it seems that there is a slight difference in opinions between the first-generation Chinese and the Canadian born respondents in the sense that the first-generation focus more on culture and language maintenance while the latter place more emphasis on cognitive development or educational purposes. The first generation immigrants generally regarded the rationale of "culture maintenance" and communicative purpose" as the first or second priority for wanting their children to learn Chinese. The Canadian born respondents, on the other hand, indicated "cognitive development" as their first priority.

Figure 5 provides a summary of the distribution of responses.

Figure 5: Respondents' Rationale for Wanting Children to Learn Chinese



In the above table, more than one answer per respondent is recorded, so the total number of responses is more than 100. The responses here are not ranked in any order. From the above data, we can see the major reason for these minority subjects having their children learn their ancestral language is culture maintenance. Ninety-five per cent of the respondents believe that culture can be maintained through language. Unexpectedly, seventy per cent of the subjects see learning Chinese as advantageous to the cognitive development of their children. It is also interesting to see that "cognitive development" is the second major reason given for having the children learn Chinese rather than "communicative purpose" which is usually cited in the literature as one of the most important reasons for wanting children to learn their native tongue.

With regard to respondents' ideas about Chinese ethnic culture and language retention, all the interviewees indicated that they would be very happy to see their children keep on using Chinese when they grow up and practise their ethnic culture and customs in their daily lives. However, the majority of thirty-three families feel that the decision still rests with their children. They think that it is their children's choice whether they would like to practise a "Chinese" way of life in the future.

Seven of them believe that their children will keep on

using the Chinese language and practise their customs when they grow up. They believe this because, as parents, they are trying very hard to maintain their language and culture by teaching their children the Chinese values and tradition in their daily life. They hope and believe that their children will continue this way of life when they grow up. They feel that it is important for their children to keep on practising the Chinese way of life because of both culture maintenance and its "sophisticated" moral values.

Out of forty respondents, thirty-one think that it is very important for the parents to teach their children their ethnic language and culture at home mainly for similar reasons. Eleven out of these thirty-one families even feel that it is part of the family education which helps the child to develop self-acceptance or self-assurance so that they will not feel inferior as a minority person when they go into mainstream Canadian society. As long as they know that their own culture is respectable with a long history of civilization, they will be proud of being Chinese instead of being a "yellow minority." Also, if the children know the language and culture, hopefully they will continue and help successive generations to maintain their culture.

Eight respondents, including those who are Canadian born, feel that it is not very important to teach the ethnic traditions and customs. They believe that if their children

are growing up in this country, they will probably be integrated to the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture and lead a Canadian life. Therefore, these Chinese parents believe that no matter how much they teach, some of the language and culture will be lost generation after generation. To them, this phenomenon is inevitable; thus, it is not particularly important for the parents to teach their children the Chinese customs. One even thinks that parents should try to teach their children to integrate with the mainstream society as much as possible.

However, on the whole, the data show that a great majority (over seventy-five per cent) of respondents believe that ethnic language learning is the means to preserve culture and they do not see that there is much difference in learning the elite language or the vernacular in the case of culture maintenance. The reason given to have their children learn the ethnic language is mainly cultural. Also, it seems that there is some difference in opinion about ethnic culture and language retention between the different generations but not much difference in opinion between the different religious groups and different socio-economic classes.

The frequency distribution of the parental attitudes towards their culture and language retention is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Respondents' Attitudes Towards Culture and Language Preservation

Attitudes Towards Culture and Language Preservation	Frequency	Total
- Hope that the children can be able to maintain their ethnic culture and language.	40	40
- Maintenance of culture and language depends on children's choice.	33	40
- It is important to teach the children their native culture and language.	31	40
- It is important to teach the children their ancestral culture and language for a better self-concept of being minority.	11	40
- It is important to teach the Chinese their ethnic culture and language whose loss is sad but inevitable.	8	40
- Certain that their children will keep the Chinese way of life because of the parents' effort.	7	40
- No need to teach the children their ethnic language and culture as integration or assimilation is inevitable.	1	40

On the other hand, nine families including the four second- and third-generation families feel that Chinese culture will always stay. They believe that this can be seen from history. Chinese have been in Canada for a hundred and twenty-five years, yet there is not much evidence of a serious loss of Chinese culture and language. As every year there are new Chinese immigrants coming to North America, they believe Chinese culture and language can be maintained.

Furthermore, as the greatest population of the world is Chinese, they believe the Chinese language and culture will never die, even if their children cannot speak a Chinese dialect. Also, they feel that the big Chinese communities and Chinatowns all over the metropolitan centers of North America will help to preserve its culture and language. The respondents further suggested that although the Chinese traditions or customs may be modified or integrated with the North American customs, their essence will not disappear.

The rest of the interviewees thought that the loss of Chinese language over generations will surely lead to the loss of Chinese culture in North America which is actually very sad. They also believe that if their children are not taught about their own native language and culture, they will be assimilated to the dominant majority group and will lose their "roots" generation after generation.

On the whole, the majority feel that the loss of Chinese culture and language over generations in North America is a pity and a shame. It is considered a major concern to them. However, they feel that integration and assimilation are unavoidable as they have seen their own migration as "transplantation of roots." Thus, even though the loss is a serious problem, it is seen as inevitable. They believe that the only thing they can do in order to slow down the pace of loss or to reduce it is to teach their children their own ancestral culture and language.

In regard to their attitude towards Chinese-English bilingual schooling, all the respondents said that they would support a Chinese bilingual school and were very glad to see that it was already started in the city. The reasons they give for their support are as follows:

i) to gain respect for their race, community, culture and language from the majority of the society;

ii) to raise their social status by gaining recognition from the public;

iii) to consolidate the influence and power of their ethnic community in the mainstream society;

iv) to give people from other ancestral origin a chance to learn the Chinese language and culture in order to promote understanding between races.

If we compare these reasons to the reasons given for

learning Chinese (supra, Figure 5, p. 65), they appear quite different. It would appear that the question about ethnic language learning is quite different from the question about learning the language in a bilingual school. These responses are associated much more with the relationship of the Chinese Canadian Community to the dominant community, and display concern for status, respect and ethnic power rather than communication and culture maintenance.

Despite the positive support that the respondents gave to the establishment of a Chinese bilingual school, many indicated uncertainty about sending their children to the program. Only fourteen said they would send their children there. Sixty-five per cent (twenty-six families) indicated the reasons for their uncertainty as the following:

i) not sure if the Chinese bilingual program will provide proper education for university in the future;

ii) not sure if the Chinese bilingual program will miss some of the substance that is provided in the regular program;

iii) not sure if it is good for children's adjustment and adaptation in the future;

iv) transportation might be a problem;

v) would like to see how the program goes as the school is now an experiment;

vi) believe that the parents can teach the children their language and culture at home so that the children can concentrate on their English or even a "third language" such as French at school;

vii) are not sure if there will be any problem in the children's integration with the majority in the future (as these children who are in the program will probably spend most of their time in mixing with their own ethnic group, they may have difficulties in mixing with the majority or other minority in the future when they are out of this program).

On the whole, all the respondents believe that it is very good for their children to have a chance to learn their own language. Also, they feel that a Chinese bilingual school is very beneficial to their ethnic group in a social perspective. However, the majority of sixty-five per cent are in favor of "weekend" or "after school" programs rather than a full-time program for the reasons mentioned above.

Even though the respondents were not sure if they would send their children to a Chinese bilingual school, none of them thought that the learning of Chinese would affect the learning of English. Instead, they believe that being bilingual, the children's experience will be widened by another kind of conceptual tool - language. Their world of

knowledge will certainly be enlarged. Many parents believe that bilingualism will lead to creativity and well-balanced cognitive development. In fact, as indicated in Figure 5, twenty-eight interviewees pointed out that one of the major reasons for wanting the children to take the bilingual program is because of their belief in "positive cognitive development."

Twenty-six families again show their doubts in relation to the children's integration with the majority society. They believe that as Chinese is not a "minority official language" like French, there will not be many non-Chinese enrolled. If all the students are of Chinese origin, there might be a possibility that their children will only stay together with their own group and will not be able to adjust to the mainstream Canadian culture when they get out of the program or go back to the regular school. However, the rest of the interviewees (fourteen families) feel that there will not be any problems in their children's integration with the mainstream society. These respondents include three refugee families and three Canadian born subjects. This is because they believe that children are very flexible and adaptable. Besides, if the teacher and the parents know how to help their children to amalgamate the good qualities of two cultures, there will not be any problem. These parents believe that problems of integration will not occur if the

program is well set and effective.

Furthermore, when the respondents were asked if they thought that Chinese bilingual schooling would help to retain the Chinese language and culture in North America, all forty of them said that it would surely help to a certain degree. They believe that the loss of culture will be slower and reduced. However, it is still unavoidable for the minority to give up part of their culture and language in order to be integrated and assimilated into the mainstream society in order to get social and economic mobility. Therefore, loss or modification of the minority culture and language obviously cannot be avoided. Nevertheless, these parents do believe that the Bilingual Program will help to retain their ethnic traditions and language to a certain extent.

In addition, all respondents believe that bilingual schooling should be introduced to their children as early as possible such as kindergarten or even nursery school. Twenty-two families think that Chinese-English bilingual education should be offered up to grade twelve while eleven think that it should be offered up to grade six.

The frequency distribution of responses is summarized in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Respondents' Attitudes Towards Ideal Number of Years of Chinese-English Bilingual Program

Ideal Number of Years of Chinese English Bilingual Program	Frequency	Total
Up to Grade 6	22	40
Up to Grade 9	7	40
Up to Grade 12	11	40

Last of all, issues on dialects of instruction in the Chinese-English Bilingual School had also been discussed in these interviews. All the forty families are Cantonese speaking. Out of these interviewees, twenty-eight of them are in favor of Cantonese instruction. Their rationale is as follows:

1. The family can serve as a support system for the children's learning of the spoken dialect, as parents can practise with them at home.
2. Communication with the grandparents or other relatives and friends is desirable and most of them are Cantonese speaking.
3. It is believed that Cantonese is harder to learn; therefore, children should start with Cantonese. When they have achieved a strong foundation in the Chinese language (Cantonese and the universal written language)

they can be introduced to other dialects or Mandarin.

4. It is believed that Cantonese is a language of wider communication.

Eight families are in favor of Mandarin instruction. Their rationale is:

1. Mandarin is the language used for education and it is linguistically superior to other dialects.
2. Mandarin is the international and official language of China.
3. If the program is offered up to grade twelve, the students can be able to continue their learning of Chinese in the university where the program is offered in Mandarin.
4. Cantonese has been a common dialect among the Chinese in North America. That is because during these twenty years, most of the immigrants were from Hong Kong, a Cantonese speaking city. However, when the Hong Kong lease expires in 1997, it is believed that Hong Kong will gradually become a Mandarin speaking city. Thus, for future practical and communicative purposes, the program should be offered in Mandarin.
5. As the parents are Cantonese speaking, it is easy for the children to learn Cantonese at home. Therefore, the school should provide instruction of Mandarin which the children cannot obtain at home.

Four other families who are second and third generations of immigrants indicated that they have no particular preference on the issue of dialects. That is because they feel that they are not able to help their children much in either Mandarin or Cantonese owing to their weaknesses in the Chinese language.

Given the attitudes of these respondents towards Chinese-English bilingual schooling, we can see that there are certain implications for the implementation of a Chinese-English bilingual program in Edmonton. It may be assumed that those interviewees who see Chinese-English bilingual school as a means to retain culture, to have better communication with relatives and to preserve ethnic identity will probably prefer "vernacular bilingualism" which means Cantonese instruction. That is, only through mother tongue instruction can the children of these Cantonese speaking families have the appropriate language to communicate with their relatives and through communication learn the culture, traditions and experience from their elders.

However, other respondents such as the Canadian born Chinese families, who see learning Chinese as important for cognitive development, probably have no preference in the dialects of instruction. For these interviewees, as long as their children can read and write one language other than

English (preferably their own ethnic language of Chinese) they will be exposed to a wider scope of experience and knowledge. Therefore, it does not matter which dialects their children are going to learn. In any case, these parents cannot help their children practise at home with either Cantonese or Mandarin.

Lastly, Mandarin instruction perhaps can be assumed as the preference of those who see learning Chinese is for future practical use. That is so because Mandarin is the international standardized elite version of the Chinese language.

Even though the majority of the respondents are from educated and middle upper or middle classes, there is no obvious indication that they give strong support to "elitist bilingualism." Only twenty per cent of the families favor Mandarin while seventy per cent of them are for "vernacular bilingualism."

The respondents' uncertainty about sending their children to a Chinese-English bilingual school owing to various reasons further implies that there will be a problem in recruiting students to the existing Chinese-English Bilingual Program of Edmonton. If the Chinese parents only support such a program theoretically instead of practically, one may wonder if the program will be able to continue given possible low enrollments.

Finally, even though the data show that sixty-five per cent of the respondents have some sort of religious affiliation, none of them have indicated that one of the reasons for their support of the Chinese-English bilingual school is to maintain ethnic religious ties. Ethnic religion preservation is presented as one of the major cultural motives for bilingual education in the literature; however, this does not seem to apply within the Edmonton Chinese community.

Do the parental attitudes described here seem to have influenced the Chinese-English Bilingual Program in Edmonton? Are there problems in the program with the dialects of instruction as we might expect from the above, given the different interests of parents? To address these questions it is necessary to look at the development of that program, and problems which have arisen. This will be done in the following chapters.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHINESE-ENGLISH BILINGUAL PROGRAM OF EDMONTON

The most recently developed bilingual program in Edmonton is the Chinese-English Bilingual Program. It was officially approved by the Public School Board of the city in the late summer of 1983. This new program will be investigated particularly with respect to its historical background, its operation, its future prospects and the difficulties that have been encountered.

To obtain a better understanding of the different aspects of the Edmonton Chinese-English Bilingual Program, it is helpful to have a general overview of the Chinese-English bilingual programs of other metropolitan areas throughout Canada. It is necessary to do this because these programs have provided ideas to the Chinese community in Edmonton for the initiation and implementation of the Edmonton Chinese-English Bililngual Program.

The Recent Chinese-English Bilingual Programs of Selected Metropolitan Areas of Canada

The tremendous increase in the Chinese population of the last two decades has likely consolidated their sense of an ethnic boundary. It is also because of the strong

Chinese ethnic communities all over the country that the idea of solidarity through culture and language maintenance has been initiated. Among all the minority groups, the Chinese, particularly, appear to be most seriously concerned by the decreasing use of their language (O'Bryan, Reitz and Kuplowska 1976). As a matter of fact, there are many culturally related problems bothering the Chinese including social isolation, job discrimination, loss of tradition and other difficulties. However, among all of these problems, they most often mention the decreasing use of the Chinese language as "serious." Because of this, the need to preserve culture and language is obviously and particularly strong in the Chinese community. They can be expected to strive for an opportunity to introduce their language and culture in the educational system in order to provide a chance for their younger generation to retain their language and culture.

Even before the Federal Government Policy of Multiculturalism and Multilingualism, the idea of Chinese-English bilingual schooling existed. Part-time or weekend Chinese bilingual programs have been offered in many metropolitan areas. Privately funded part-time programs have also been established. The Chinese-English bilingual programs of Toronto and Calgary are good examples. The one in Calgary has been offering programs of study up to grade

six for more than thirty years. Even though this program is privately funded, it has been highly supported by the Chinese community and the parents of Calgary. In fact, when the Edmonton Chinese Graduate Students' Association first initiated the idea of establishing a Chinese-English bilingual school, the organizing board of the Calgary Program had intended to join the Edmonton organizing board to work together and to apply for government funding from the provincial Minister of Education.

Toronto has perhaps the major concentration of Chinese immigrants in recent years. Data have suggested that there were approximately 50,000 Chinese in this city in the mid-seventies (Anderson & Frideres, 1981:164). Their Chinese-English bilingual school has been operating since the Second World War. It is also privately run by the Chinese community and by the parents' group. In 1973, the Toronto Board of Education finally gave official approval to the establishment of the Chinese bilingual-bicultural program in several public elementary schools. Since then, the Chinese-English bilingual schools have been under the Toronto Public School Board and have been government funded.

Two Chinese-English bilingual schools can also be found in the city of Vancouver where 46.6% of the Chinese population of Canada lives. These two schools in fact are among the oldest bilingual schools of British Columbia and

are the oldest Chinese-English bilingual schools of the country. Today, the Chinese bilingual schools of Vancouver offer programs up to Junior High level. Also in Vancouver of British Columbia the Victoria Chinese Public School was opened as early as 1917. This again illustrates a desire among the Chinese population for culture and language maintenance long before federal government encouragement and support for multiculturalism and multilingualism.

The city of Montreal is another large metropolitan center where there is a Chinese community. The Montreal Chinese-English bilingual program was once offered in another Yu Group dialect - Toashanese - owing to the great number of Toashanese speaking families. However, as more people have come as immigrants to Montreal from Hong Kong during the last fifteen years, the dialects of the school have been changed from Toashanese to Cantonese (Bain, 1983).

The ex-president of the Chinese Graduate Students' Association, in an interview, pointed out that these Chinese-English bilingual programs of other metropolitan areas throughout the country intensified the interest of the Edmonton Chinese community. Being encouraged by the federal policy of multiculturalism, and seeing a crisis of language and culture loss over generations, the Edmonton Chinese community (especially university students and parent groups) initiated the idea of establishing a Chinese-English

bilingual school in the city for the purpose of culture and language preservation.

In the following part of the chapter, a general picture of various issues of the Edmonton Chinese-English Bilingual Program will be presented. Its historical background, its problem with regard to the dialects of instruction and its future prospect will be investigated.

The Edmonton Chinese-English Bilingual Program

I. Historical Background

The Chinese-English Bilingual Program of Edmonton came into being in the fall of 1982. With the encouragement of the Federal Multiculturalism and Multilingualism Policy, the Program is designed to give the Chinese minority descendants an opportunity to maintain their culture and language in an Anglo-Saxon majority society. Seeing that the teaching of minority ethnic languages has become a common phenomenon, as witnessed by the Ukrainian, Cree, Arabic, Hebrew and German programs in the city, the Chinese Graduate Students' Association of Edmonton first proposed to the provincial government the setting up of a Chinese-English Bilingual School in the city in the summer of 1980.

According to provincial legislation, the Chinese community had to have one hundred children registered before

they could be granted official approval to set up their own ethnic school. Owing to the difficulty in obtaining such a great number, the Minister of Education of Alberta suggested to the Chinese Graduate Students' Association that the program should be implemented at the kindergarten and grade one level in the public school system. From then on, the organization of the Chinese-English Bilingual Program adopted the curriculum set by the Early Childhood Language Services and came under the supervision of the Edmonton Public School Board.

After setting the target of developing a Chinese-English bilingual kindergarten program instead of a hundred-student bilingual school, the Association started to gather a number of Chinese families in the city to work on the plan and the proposal. The organizing group of this Chinese-English Bilingual Program did a survey by phoning all the people with Chinese family names listed in the Edmonton phone book and asking for opinions and suggestions. This survey showed that most of the families in the city were Cantonese speaking and there were various opinions towards the aspect of dialects of instruction. Specifically, about half of the parents wanted Cantonese instruction while the other half wanted Mandarin instruction. It is this issue of dialects of instruction that gave rise to many arguments and conflicts between the

pro-Mandarin group and those who favored the teaching of Cantonese during the organizational process of the whole program.

Rationale for "Mandarin" instruction is:

1. Mandarin is the "national dialect" of China and has always been regarded as linguistically superior to the other dialects. It is the language of education and for long has been a symbol of "educated" in the country. In contrast, Cantonese is a home language which can be taught by the parents and it is only used within its dialectal community.
2. If the students can keep up the standard and if the program is offered up to grade twelve in the future, they may continue their Chinese studies in the university. University studies are in the national language of Mandarin.
3. If children know the national language, they may have a better opportunity in some of the cross-cultural and diplomatic jobs.
4. Mandarin is easier to learn than other dialects as it has only four different tones and can be learned by the method of "pinyin" (spell sounds).

On the other hand, the rationale for "Cantonese" instruction is the following:

1. As Cantonese cannot be learned by the method of "pinyin" and has nine different tones, it is harder for the children to learn. Thus, the students should be taught in Cantonese together with the universal written orthography in the elementary grades. Once the children have a strong foundation in their mother tongue, it will not be hard for them to learn Mandarin or any other dialects of the Chinese language.
2. Cantonese is a more popular dialect, especially in North America. If the children know this dialect, they can communicate better with their grandparents, relatives and other peers in their own ethnic community. Through the communication with people of the same ethnic background and grandparents, culture will easily be maintained. Thus, in order to maintain culture and ethnic identity in the younger generation, the most popular dialect or the "mother tongue" of the majority Chinese students should be taught.
3. There will probably be no support system given by the parents for the children learning Mandarin as the Cantonese parents who do not know Mandarin will not be able to practise with their children at home.

4. The idea of "mother tongue" instruction will be distorted if Mandarin is taught in the program. As almost over eighty per cent of the children are from Cantonese speaking families, the learning of Mandarin is actually learning a new language. It is not the learning of "mother tongue" at all.
5. For a four-year old child who comes from a Cantonese speaking family, it will be very difficult for him to learn three languages: Cantonese at home and Mandarin and English in school. Even though the Chinese language has a common orthography for all dialects, spoken forms are very different. Thus, to these children, they are actually learning three languages at the same time without much practice in any of them.

In a series of meetings and discussions on the issue of dialects of instruction, there existed two groups of parents: the pro-Cantonese group and the pro-Mandarin group. The pro-Mandarin group were mostly Cantonese speaking themselves; even though they preferred their children to learn Mandarin instead. They were more educated and of higher socio-economic status than those of the pro-Cantonese group. Some of these parents were from Taiwan and Vietnam where Mandarin is widely used. Most of the mothers of this group were housewives who had more time for

community work than mothers employed outside the home. They showed great enthusiasm in planning the program.

It was perhaps because of the above factors that the pro-Mandarin parents were able to exert more influence in the organizational process and in the implementation of Mandarin as the dialect of instruction. These wealthier and more educated pro-Mandarin parents were also the group who later helped in organizing the board and who applied for a subsidy for the establishment of a Chinese-English Bilingual Program. They incorporated Mandarin as the medium of instruction in the school. Although a lot of pro-Cantonese parents were discontented with the decision for Mandarin instruction, there was nothing much they could do about it. This was partly because within the organizing committee, they were not as socially and financially influential as the pro-Mandarin group. Some of these pro-Cantonese parents were so discontented that they withdrew from the bilingual school planning group.

In order to work on the proposal to the Edmonton Public School Board for official approval and financial support for this Bilingual Program, an Organizing Committee Board was formed. At that time,, the Chinese Graduate Students' Association have moved to a role of providing financial assistance, and they withdrew from any of the decision roles. The Organizing Committee Board consists then mainly

of parents, professors from the University of Alberta and officials from the School Board. The parents who are involved are mostly well educated and from the higher socio-economic classes.

Among the parents were Taiwanese and Vietnamese who were in favor of Mandarin instruction. Two university professors particularly interested in East Asian Studies and Asian language strongly proposed in an open speech that the Chinese "national language" of Mandarin should be the school's language of instruction. Furthermore, a Mandarin speaking Taiwanese couple who had taught Mandarin in one of the Continuing Education programs in the city and had close connection with the School Board highly recommended the instruction of Mandarin. With such dominant influence within the Board, the final language decision was for Mandarin instruction.

The Edmonton Public School Board gave approval to this Chinese-English Bilingual Program with Mandarin as the medium of instruction in 1982. The past-president of the Edmonton Graduate Students' Association pointed out that even though the Mandarin instruction of this program does not meet the purpose of "mother tongue" maintenance and instruction of bilingual education and does not meet the needs of the Chinese community in promoting better communication between the old and the young, the School

Board still gave approval. Their reasons were the following:

1. The proposal that was presented by the Organizing Committee Board of the Chinese-English Bilingual Program indicated a preference for Mandarin, thus the School Board thought that it was the preference of the majority of Chinese in the Edmonton Chinese community.
2. Mandarin is the "national language" of China.
3. Highly educated personnel from the University who were being recognized as "expert" in Asian languages and Asian Studies had highly recommended the teaching of Mandarin.
4. The people who were interested in designing the curriculum were in favor of Mandarin teaching as they were Mandarin speaking themselves and had close connections with the School Board.

This past-president of the Association also explained that the Graduate Students withdrew from the planning and decision role, as they did not want to get into conflicts within the Chinese community.

The organization of the whole program took exactly two years to complete. The first two classes of kindergarten were finally started in the two schools of Edmonton in

September, 1982. These two schools were Strathearn Elementary School in the south and Glengarry Elementary in the north. In that school year of 1982-1983, there were altogether thirty-four students with twelve in the south and twenty-two in the north. This program was privately funded with government subsidy and was an experiment for a year.

The program is based on the objective of full bilateral bilingualism (Fishman, 1976) in which students are to develop all skills in both Chinese and English in all domains. It was operated in a way so that the two schools could have alternate days for pure Chinese and pure English. Although over eighty per cent of the students were from Cantonese speaking families, both schools were taught by a Mandarin speaking teacher who had no knowledge of Cantonese.

The first year of this experiment indicated the strong support from the parents' association. The deficit of almost ten thousand dollars was overcome by parents' fund raising and donations. The school year finished with six pupils dropping out of Glengarry Elementary School and four other children requiring English as a second language special training because of their low standard in English. It was also found at the end of the first year of kindergarten that only those who came from Mandarin speaking families could speak a little bit of Mandarin. Students who came from Cantonese speaking homes indicated no knowledge in

spoken Mandarin. All students did know the written form of some simple Chinese characters.

II. Present Situation

In the summer of 1983, after one year of experiment, the Chinese-English Bilingual Program of Edmonton was placed fully under the Edmonton Public School Board and received full public funding. That fall the program was offered in two public schools of Edmonton other than Strathearn Elementary School and Glengarry Elementary School. The two schools that are now offering the Chinese-English immersion program are Kildare Elementary of Londonderry in the north and Meyonohk Elementary School of Millwoods in the south. Both areas, in fact, have the highest concentration of Chinese population in the city (Yu, 1981).

In the present school year (1983-1984), two grade one classes are offered together with the two kindergarten classes in the two schools. In Kildare Elementary School, there are altogether thirty-three in kindergarten and twenty-four pupils in grade one. Of these twenty-four, eighteen were promoted from the previous year's kindergarten program at Glengarry Elementary School. This indicates that there are altogether six newcomers in grade one and six drop-outs from last year kindergarten. In Meyonohk Elementary School, there are only twenty-two in kindergarten

and sixteen in grade one, and twelve of the grade ones were promoted from the previous year's kindergarten program at Strathearn Elementary School.

In both Kildare Elementary School and Meyonohk Elementary School, the kindergarten is a half-day school with English and Chinese taught at the same time through a translating method, while the grade one has English only in the morning and Chinese only in the afternoon. In Meyonohk Elementary School, there is one full-time teacher, one full-time teaching aide and one employee who is both part-time teacher and part-time program consultant. In Kildare Elementary School, there is one full-time teacher and one part-time teaching aide.

Parents give strong support to this Chinese-English Bilingual Program. Ten parents come quite often to help as classroom aides during the day. Three fathers who work during the night are constantly in the school helping the teacher in promoting the program. These parents also admit that if they want the program to work successfully and continuously, they have to work extra hard with their children. As all the children except six are from Cantonese families, they can get little or no practice in speaking Mandarin at home. Thus, these parents feel that the only support they can provide at home is to practise with their

children the written form of the Chinese language. Parents also show their support by participation in the Parent-Teachers' Association.

All the students except four (two Mandarin speaking and two English speaking) in Kildare Elementary School are from Cantonese speaking homes. It is perhaps because of this that the children are often found talking either in English or Cantonese instead of Mandarin with their peers when they are in school. The grade one students show some understanding of the teacher's Mandarin instruction but they show very limited ability to speak Mandarin. In relation to English, four out of twenty-four require English as a second language training owing to their low standard in English.

III. Future Prospects

On the whole, it seems that the main concern or difficulty that has been encountered by the school, the teachers and the parents is the learning problems of the children. Because of the lack of practice in spoken Mandarin and English at home, some people express concern that the program cannot produce satisfactory levels of improvement in the students' performance. There has been doubt expressed about whether or not this Chinese-English Bilingual Program can be continued in another couple of years. Both the school and the parents are worried that if

the 25% drop-out rate continues in another two years without many newcomers, especially after grade two, there will not be enough enrollment for the program. Another problem is the expensive transportation fee of over sixty dollars per child each month. The school is worried that there may be more drop-outs owing to this problem of transportation. The students' low standard of English (when compared to that of the regular program) also makes some people doubt the quality of the program.

Furthermore, these people think that this Chinese-English Bilingual Program does not serve the purpose of "mother tongue" maintenance even though the learning of Mandarin can help the community maintain their ethnic culture. Also, the learning of Mandarin cannot help the younger generation to communicate with their grandparents or relatives, since most of these students are from Cantonese speaking families. Dale (1976:255) points out that language is learned in a social setting and children learn language by talking and hearing the adults and, most of all, their parents. Thus, communication would seem to be the most obvious function of the language. In the case of this Chinese-English Bilingual Program, the learning of Mandarin does not seem to serve the function of communication and the students cannot learn it through talking and hearing their parents for their parents do not speak the dialect.

On the other hand, some parents feel that it is not surprising that pupils who enroll in this Bilingual Program have lower standards than pupils in the regular school program. They believe that it is a normal trend and that the children need a few years to adapt to the program before they can improve their performance. This idea perhaps can be supported by results of the study of the St. Lambert French Immersion Program of Quebec. Children enrolled in this program show a standard that is below average before grade four. After grade four, these bilingual children not only catch up to the level of the corresponding grade, but also achieve a higher standard in verbal and mathematical learning than the students of the regular program. Therefore, for those people who do not regard the low standard in both English and Mandarin as an unsatisfactory outcome, the outlook and the future prospect for pupils of this Chinese-English Bilingual Program are still positive and encouraging.

No doubt, in a newly developed program like this Chinese-English Bilingual School, there will exist a lot of difficulties and problems that both the school and the parents have to face. It is for this reason that the parents have been trying to give as much support and encouragement as they can to make this program carry on satisfactorily and effectively.

In the following concluding chapter, further comment and evaluation of this Chinese-English Bilingual Program will be presented. The conflicts within the Chinese community and the aspects of dialects of instruction will again be examined more thoroughly. The influence of the Edmonton Chinese parents' attitudes towards this Chinese-English Bilingual Program will also be discussed.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, the results of the study of the Edmonton Chinese parents' attitudes towards Chinese-English bilingual schooling, and the development of the Edmonton Chinese-English Bilingual Program will be summarized. These results will be discussed, followed by a discussion of implications and suggestions for further research.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was two-fold. Firstly, it explored Chinese parental attitudes towards Chinese-English bilingual schooling and their rationale for supporting such a program. These attitudes were compared to the pattern of beliefs described in the literature which reports on the cultural context of bilingual education. Secondly, the development of the Edmonton Chinese-English Bilingual School in the public system was described in order to obtain a better understanding of the Chinese parents' and community's influence upon their ethnic bilingual school. This study focused in particular on the historical background, the present situation and future prospects of this Edmonton Chinese-English Bilingual Program.

To explore the Chinese parental attitudes towards Chinese-English bilingual schooling, a non-random sample of forty Chinese families were interviewed. This included thirty-six first-generation immigrant families, three families from the second generation and one family from the third generation. In terms of social class, the sample consisted of thirty middle class families and ten lower socio-economic class refugees families according to the Blishen occupational scale. This survey was done through personal, open-ended and unstructured interviews. The interviews were conducted in Cantonese, a southern dialect of the Chinese language.

In order to see whether there was any difference in the Chinese parents' attitudes or opinions towards the Chinese-English Bilingual Program between different religious groups, different socio-economic classes and different generations, questions concerning education, religious affiliation, age group, generation with regard to migration, language use at home, at work and in social circles, years of staying in Canada and the ethnic origins of friends were asked. In addition, questions relating to the respondents' opinions towards ethnic language and culture preservation, native language and culture loss over generations and their rationale for the support of the Chinese-English Bilingual Program were asked. Other relevant information about the

respondents' attitudes towards the dialects of instruction was also sought.

The major conclusion of this study is that Chinese parental attitudes towards Chinese-English bilingual schooling indicate that bilingual education is perceived primarily as a cultural phenomenon. That is, the Chinese community's rationale for supporting bilingual education is mainly cultural. These reasons include the preservation of the ancestral language and culture, the promotion of better communication between the young and the old within their community and the provision of an opportunity to learn a popular language for practical and future use.

The findings also indicate that the Chinese families have a strong desire to maintain their culture and language. They all would like very much to have their children continue the practice of their language and culture. These findings support O'Bryan, Reitz and Kuplowska's statement that the Chinese in Canada see language and culture loss as a "very serious" problem to their community and that the ancestral language should be taught to the younger generation for the sake of culture maintenance.

However, a factor present in the Edmonton sample, but not described in the literature, is that bilingual education is seen as more than a means to preserve culture and "mother tongue" of the minority ethnic groups. It can also be a

means to provide a wider scope of experience for cognitive development. To widen the children's field of knowledge was given as the second major reason for having the children enrolled in the Chinese-English Bilingual Program. Such parental attitudes actually fit to the pattern of "elitist bilingualism" which has been suggested by Gaarder (1971).

On the whole, the data show little difference in opinions between the different generations, different religious groups and different socio-economic groups. There is, however, a slight difference in the attitudes between the first-generation Chinese Canadians and the Canadian born respondents in the sense that the former favor bilingual education as a means of culture and language preservation, while the latter emphasize the "cognitive development" and educational purposes. This is perhaps because the Canadian born immigrants, through their personal experience, see integration as inevitable. Some even have suggested that the Chinese culture, though it may be modified, will never disappear, owing to the strong Chinese communities' influence in North America. Therefore, these second- and third-generation respondents think that to have their children learn Chinese is more for education and for self-enrichment purposes than for culture and language retention.

However, from the data collected, one may find it quite contradictory for the Canadian born respondents to say that the Chinese language and culture will never disappear. They are, after all, experiencing generational loss of the ethnic tongue themselves. It is found that even though these second- and third-generation interviewees cannot speak their mother tongue fluently or cannot understand much about their own ethnic language, they still think that the Chinese culture and language will be maintained owing to the great Chinese world population, continuous flow of Chinese immigrants and the existence of strong Chinese communities. In addition, they would like to have their children learn about their roots, ancestral language and culture while learning the culture of the mainstream society.

To a certain extent, these Canadian born respondents are quite correct in the sense that Chinese culture has been retained in North America over these hundred and fifty years, despite the fact that many third or fourth generation Chinese are losing their native tongue. Even though these people are losing their language, many of them still lead a traditional Chinese way of life. As a matter of fact, as we will see later, this separation of language and culture underlies the argument for teaching Mandarin to Cantonese speaking students. Many people think that even though the students may not know their vernacular or mother tongue

dialect, they can still retain their culture with the help of a Mandarin bilingual school program.

On the whole, these respondents feel that Chinese culture in North America will only be modified, not lost. However, one major concern of the Chinese communities is that Chinese cultures will be modified or integrated with the western cultures to such an extent that its essence will finally be lost over generations. In order to prevent that from happening, they believe that the first thing to do is to educate their children about their own roots, language and culture. They feel that the large Chinese population, the strong Chinese communities and the continuously coming Chinese immigrants will help to maintain their culture and language, but education is the most important and basic foundation.

Given the attitudes of Chinese parents in Edmonton, it is necessary to see how such attitudes influence the development of the Chinese-English bilingual school. Chapter three reports on the school in detail; however, again a brief summary will be presented here.

The idea of establishing a Chinese-English Bilingual Program was first implemented by the Edmonton Chinese Graduate Students' Association in 1980. The whole program took two years of organization to complete. The major problem of such a program since the organizational process

has been the issue of dialect of instruction. The dialect of Mandarin was finally accepted even though almost 95% of the students are from Cantonese speaking families. Arguments arose as many of the parents did not consider that the instruction of Mandarin was serving the purpose of "mother tongue" or "vernacular bilingualism." They felt that the learning of Mandarin, for the Cantonese speaking students, could not help them to promote better communication with their relatives and could not help them to retain their "mother tongue."

On the other hand, the pro-Mandarin group, mostly the wealthier and higher educated parents and personnel from the School Board, saw Mandarin as the standard national language of China. They believed that it should be taught instead of any other dialects of the Chinese language. They thought that the instruction of Mandarin, even though it might not be able to help the students to maintain their "mother tongue," it could still help the Chinese community to preserve their ethnic "national" language, culture and identity in the younger generation.

Recent problems that the school has encountered are mainly academic concerns of the students. Pupils of this program have shown weaknesses in the acquisition of Chinese and English. For example, four grade one students in last year's kindergarten program required English as a second

language special training because of their low standard in comparison with children from the regular program. As well, according to the teacher, most of the grade one students are not even up to the standard expected of them for learning Chinese. Only five grade one students can speak rudimentary Mandarin and this can largely be attributed to the fact that these five pupils are raised in Mandarin speaking families where the language can be acquired by speaking with the parents.

In addition, the children from Cantonese speaking families possess only some knowledge of the written form of the Chinese language. It was found that these children can read and write only some simple Chinese characters.

It also seems that students who are from Cantonese speaking homes prefer to speak only Cantonese or English at school. Without practice at home with the parents, these children may find it very hard to learn Mandarin owing to the short period of time available to practise at school.

Some people may argue that students of bilingual programs usually do not do as well as those in the regular program, especially during the first to fourth grades, because they simply need time to adapt. This phenomenon can be found in many studies, such as Lambert's study of St. Lambert Immersion Program of Quebec referred to above. In fact, it is possible that the students of Edmonton

Chinese-English Bilingual Program may academically catch up to or even surpass the achievement of students in the regular program in a few years time.

Another interesting point in regard to this "below-average" academic problem is that it may not be quite fair to say that these children's language acquisition in both Mandarin and English is below the average standard. That is because there is no established recognized standard to compare these children's achievement in Mandarin. Also, it is not uncommon to find pupils of the regular program requiring English as a second language special training. Therefore, the four students of this Chinese-English Bilingual Program who required English as a second language training cannot be considered as seriously "below-average."

However, one must also consider that direct family assistance and community support are crucial determining factors in children's education. As previously mentioned, the majority of the children registered in the Edmonton Chinese-English Bilingual Program are from Cantonese speaking homes, and because of this, these children cannot practise the new language of Mandarin with their family members. It should also be realized that according to the linguists, these pupils are actually exposed to three languages at the same time (English and Mandarin in school, Cantonese at home). While parents may think that it is

better for their children to learn China's official dialect instead of their ancestral language of Cantonese, which they think can be taught by themselves at home, they have overlooked the difficulty of a four-year-old child having to adjust to three different spoken languages at the same time with very limited support and minimal opportunities for practice in any one of them.

The 25% drop-out rate of the students of last year is considered by the school as another serious problem. As there will not be any newcomers after grade two, the school and the parents are worried that if the drop-out rate of 25% continues in another two years there will not be enough students. This "high drop-out rate" together with the students' "below-average standard" in both English and Mandarin make some people wonder whether the program can carry on satisfactorily in the years to come. These problems also suggest that the Chinese-English Bilingual Program may require some sort of re-evaluation and perhaps reconstruction of its curriculum. Many arguments have been raised to promote this Chinese-English Bilingual Program for the last couple of years, particularly in the aspects of "mother tongue" and Cantonese/Mandarin issues. Therefore, it may be necessary to investigate the rationale behind the introduction of "vernaculars" or "mother tongue" in the school system. Even though the students in this program are

learning their ethnic language of Chinese, they are not really learning their vernacular, as their "mother tongue" is Cantonese rather than Mandarin.

From a cultural point of view, language cannot be dissociated from culture and is a means to encode and transmit cultural information. Even though some Chinese believe that no matter which Chinese dialect their children learn, as long as their children know how to read and write the Chinese language, their culture can be maintained. Such belief, as a matter of fact, is only true to a certain extent. No doubt the children can learn a lot about their culture through reading the Chinese classics and literature; however, if they do not know their mother tongue, they will probably miss a lot of cultural information and experience that are transmitted from their elders. Therefore, it can be concluded that if the elite language of Mandarin rather than the vernacular of the students is taught, only part of the culture can be maintained.

From a psychological point of view of the child and the perspective of identity preservation, the overriding argument on the dialect of instruction presented is that education in the child's "mother tongue" is sound. Psychologically, for non-English speaking children, the first days of school are apt to be confusing. Also, an

educational system that recognizes the child's past experience is of positive advantage to the child's self-image. This idea is further supported by a UNESCO statement:

> It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than an unfamiliar linguistic medium.

Gaarder (1967) in his statement to Senator Yarborough's special sub-committee on Bilingual Education, also pointed out the importance of "mother tongue" learning towards a minority child's preservation of ethnic identity and culture. He states:

> If the school, the all powerful school, rejects the "mother tongue" of an entire group of the children, it can be expected to affect seriously and adversely those children's concept of parents, their homes and of themselves.

To a certain extent, the Chinese-English Bilingual Program does not quite meet the ideal of bilingual education that UNESCO and Gaarder have suggested in the sense that it does not provide "mother tongue" instruction to the children. Because of this, some people may doubt whether the use of an unfamiliar linguistic medium of Mandarin is healthy psychologically, sociologically and educationally to the children. These people see that the use of a

"non-mother tongue dialect" in this Chinese-English Bilingual Program will not only cause academic problems in the students but also affect the children's self-image and concept of their parents and homes adversely. Owing to these unfavorable consequences that have been anticipated by those pro-Cantonese parents, it is also felt that this program will not be able to help the students in developing a positive ethnic identity as these students will not be able to identify with their parents and communicate with their relatives.

The rationale for Chinese's interest in vernacular education and linguistic maintenance rests explicitly and implicitly in terms of ethnicity. As stated in Fishman's Language Loyalty in the United States (1966), languages, be they vernaculars or languages of wider communication of minority immigrants, survive despite generations of concerted effort to replace them with national lingua franca. Fishman sees language as the embodiment of ethnicity and points out that increasing pressure by various ethnic groups for ethnic language bilingual schools will become a powerful force for the years to come.

Obviously, the whole situation of the dialects issue involves a certain degree of power struggle between different groups within the Chinese community. It seems the educational and economical elite of the community are

controlling the decision and are clearing policy matters of significance without considering the wishes of the majority members and the weaker socio-economic class. As mentioned before, the pro-Mandarin parents are more affluent and educated when compared to the pro-Cantonese group. It is therefore understandable that the socially and financially stronger pro-Mandarin group will have their way easily.

It is perhaps also not surprising that the "problem" forms for parents will be on the children's school performance rather than the political conflicts which underlie that performance. As a matter of fact, the situation of the Chinese-English Bilingual Program is in some respects similar to that of the other ethnic schools such as the Ukrainian and German Programs of the city. Their situations are similar in a sense that the organization and implementation of those minority ethnic educational programs are mostly in the control of either the upper class or the educated elite instead of the majority of the ethnic communities. However, they are different in that the educated Chinese elite want a specific Chinese dialect in the school, a dialect which is not the language of the children's families. In a case such as this, bilingual programs can be seen as "elitist bilingualism" in a sense that it is the hallmark of intellectuals and upper class in the society (Gaarder, 1971).

The Chinese-English Bilingual Program clearly provides a type of "elitist bilingualism" rather than "vernacular bilingualism." That is, the decision to teach Mandarin not only creates academic problems for the children owing to lack of practice with parents who are mostly Cantonese speaking, but also does not serve the purpose of "mother tongue" or "vernacular" retention - Mandarin is not the "mother tongue" of the Cantonese speaking students. Such a program can be termed an "elitist bilingual program" in the sense that the students are learning another new language or dialect which is not their vernacular for the sake of self-enrichment and broadening of knowledge.

Other than the conflict or the power struggle between the pro-Mandarin group and the pro-Cantonese group within the Chinese community itself, as a matter of fact, most of the parents do have a dilemma in relation to this problem of spoken language version of instruction. On one hand, they would like their young to know their own "mother tongue" - Cantonese - for better communication with their own relatives. Also, with Cantonese learning, these Cantonese speaking parents can be able to give more home support and reinforcement to enhance the children's learning of the language.

However, on the other hand, these parents realize that for future practical use, it is better to know Mandarin

rather than Cantonese as the former is the "national language" of China. They know that Cantonese has been very popular in North America for the last few decades mainly because most the Chinese immigrants are from Hong Kong, where Cantonese is the major spoken language. However, they are worried that when the colonial situation of Hong Kong is changed in 1997 and the Chinese government takes it over, Hong Kong will become a Mandarin speaking city. This suggests that when their children grow up, Cantonese may not be as popular anymore. Therefore, for future practical use, Mandarin, which is the national language, should be taught.

Some parents from the Chinese community did suggest that the "mother tongue" of Cantonese should be taught at the beginning such as from kindergarten to grade six, in order to achieve the purpose of "mother tongue" maintenance. Then from grade seven on, the "national language" of Mandarin should be introduced. They felt that in this way children can have a better mastery of the Chinese language as the parents can help them when they first start to learn the ethnic language. However, the support for such a suggestion was not strong.

In fact, in the Chinese community of Edmonton, the majority of parents indicate that though they would like very much to have had their children practising their native customs and language, the choice still rests with the

children themselves. Besides, integration is inevitable. Thus, the writer feels that bilingual education to most of these middle class parents is in fact a means of self-enrichment. It will provide a wider scope of experience for the cognitive development of their children. It is always better to be bilingual than monolingual. Since the Chinese language, in a universal sense, is the ethnic tongue, obviously the second language (other than the dominant language of English) that should be learned ought to be Chinese (no matter what dialect). Also, these parents believe that the learning of Chinese and any of its dialects has great significance in assisting their own community in maintaining their ancestral culture and language.

Lamerand's study (Dubois, 1977:73) also supports the above idea. He points out that the major reason given by the high socio-economic status members for the support of bilingual schooling is self-enrichment. Being a member of the minority in a dominant English speaking society, one will probably not have much opportunity to get to know the other minorities' cultures or his own culture in depth. Therefore, it is believed that bilingual education will not only protect the minorities' language but also enrich the students' experience for the sake of education itself. By knowing one more language or a person's own ethnic language, it is believed that his personal experience will be broadened.

Furthermore, where the language spoken at home is different from that spoken at school, literacy in the home language is usually promoted as a tool for the acquisition of literacy in the school language (C. C. Christian, Jr., 1977:17). It would appear that many of the Chinese believe that they can skip learning literacy in Cantonese and go directly to learning the Chinese school language of Mandarin. Clearly, the findings of this survey are congruent with Gaarder's idea of "elitist bilingualism" (1977) in which a child learns a second language, or in this particular case an ethnic language, by choice, for the sake of self-enrichment or for educational benefits.

Despite all the positive support towards the Chinese Bilingual Program that has been revealed in the interviews with the parents, parents are uncertain as to whether or not they are going to send their children to such programs. One reason for this uncertainty is that the parents are not sure if the program is effective in teaching both good English as well as good Chinese to their children. Consequently, they are worried that their children will have problems in interacting and integrating with mainstream Canadian society in the future. In fact, it is interesting and surprising to note such contradictory opinions. Although the Chinese parents are positive in their attitudes towards the Chinese-English Bilingual Program, it seems that most of

them do not really support the Edmonton Chinese-English Bilingual School by sending their children to enroll in its Program. Therefore, they are actually non-supportive in a sense that the parents support the idea of Chinese bilingual school theoretically but not practically. Most of the parents actually prefer part-time weekend programs to full-time bilingual programs. The findings may suggest the following implications:

1. More weekend part-time Chinese programs would probably obtain better practical support and higher enrollment.
2. The future of the existing full-time Chinese-English bilingual school is in doubt because, as shown in the data, many Chinese parents are unwilling to commit their children to such a program. Some of the parents' worries are actually substantiated by this study.

Suggestions for Further Research

As well as looking at the Chinese parents' attitudes towards Chinese-English bilingual schooling and their differences towards the implementation of such programs, this study also attempted to describe the Edmonton Chinese-English Bilingual Program, especially the present stages of implementation, in order to determine if the present program was effective enough to develop Chinese-

English bilingualism. Further studies might attempt to identify the most effective methods and dialects of instruction needed to be considered by the program organizers for the operation and development of a successful Chinese-English bilingual program.

A follow-up longitudinal research to study the academic and linguistic progress of students would be invaluable to find out if the present Chinese-English Bilingual Program requires any improvement or changes in either the method of instruction or type of dialects. Other research could encompass a comparison between the students' academic achievement of the Edmonton Chinese-English (Mandarin) Bilingual Program and that of the other Chinese-English (Cantonese) bilingual programs in the other metropolitan centers of the country. Through further comparative studies we might be able to discern whether or not there are differences in academic achievement between children learning Chinese in different dialects.

Furthermore, as the respondents in this study were of similar dialectal (Cantonese) backgrounds and were a non-random sample, a larger-scale study with a structured random sample from different dialectal backgrounds, different socio-economic classes, and from different generations would be of much value. Such a large-scale

study would possibly raise a series of questions not raised by this type of study.

Finally, as bilingual education is the product not only of cultural factors, but also of social and political factors, it would be worthwhile to study the Edmonton Chinese community's control, power struggle and influence over Chinese-English bilingual schools. This would certainly give us a clearer picture and a better understanding as to how bilingual schooling and its success are dependent upon both cultural and socio-political factors.

But clearly, the major implication of this study is that the simple equation of vernacular language and culture in bilingual schooling is problematic, at least in the Chinese case. The Chinese people interviewed concern themselves with ethnic language retention and so see bilingual schooling as a vehicle for maintenance of Chinese culture. The Chinese speak many languages or dialects, uniquely all can be written with a single ideographic symbol system. Perhaps an analysis of historic and contemporary power relations among regional language groupings would provide more insight into officials and school languages in China, as well as bilingual schooling in the Chinese community in Edmonton.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEWING QUESTIONNAIRES

Personal Data

1. How long has the family been living in Canada?

2. Which generation does your family belong to with regard to migration?

3. What is your family's religious affiliation?

4. Do you have any extended family members living with you? Grandparents/Uncles/Aunts/etc.

5. What spoken version of the Chinese language do these extended family members and do you often speak?

6. What is the highest level of schooling that the father has completed?

7. What is the highest level of schooling that the mother has completed?

8. What is father's occupation?

9. Which age group to the parents belong to?
Under 25/25-34/35-44/45-54/55-64/65+

10. Are most of the family's friends of Chinese or Canadian origin?

11. Do most of the family's friends speak Chinese or English?

12. Are there any other Chinese living in your residential area?

13. Do you have any contact with those Chinese who live close to you?

14. Are these Chinese neighbors related to you?

15. Do you consider yourself as being fluent in the English language?

16. Do you consider yourself as being fluent in the Chinese language?

17. Do you belong to any of the Chinese organizations in Edmonton which use Chinese as the main language of communication?
18. What language to you often use in your work place? Chinese/English?

19. What language do you often use in your social circle? Chinese/English?

20. What type of family do you consider yours to be? Traditional Chinese/Westernized Canadian?

Attitudes Towards the Chinese-English Bilingual Schooling

1. Would you like your children to know the Chinese language?

   Why?
   Why not?

2. Would you like your children to keep on using Chinese when they grow up?

   Why?
   Why not?

3. Would you like your children to practise the Chinese culture and customs in their daily life?

   Why?
   Why not?

4. Do you think that it is important for the Chinese parents to teach their children their ethnic language and culture at home?

   Why?
   Why not?

5. Do you think that the loss of Chinese language will lead to the loss of Chinese culture in North America?

6. Do you think that the loss of Chinese language over generations in North America is a serious problem to the Chinese community?

7. Will you support a Chinese-English bilingual school in Edmonton?

8. If you had children of the appropriate school age, would you send them to a Chinese-English bilingual school?
9. Do you think that learning the Chinese language will affect the children's learning of English in a negative way?

10. Do you think that sending your children to a bilingual school will affect their integration with the majority of the society in the future?

11. Do you think that Chinese-English bilingual schooling will help to retain the Chinese language and culture in North America?

12. How many years do you think bilingual schooling should be offered?

    (Up to Grade 6//Grade 9//Grade 12)

13. What age do you think is best for your children to be introduced to the Chinese bilingual program?

14. What spoken version of the Chinese language do you think should be taught in a Chinese-English bilingual school? Mandarin/Cantonese/etc.